Christian Courier

52nd Year of Publication

October 25, 1996/No. 2505

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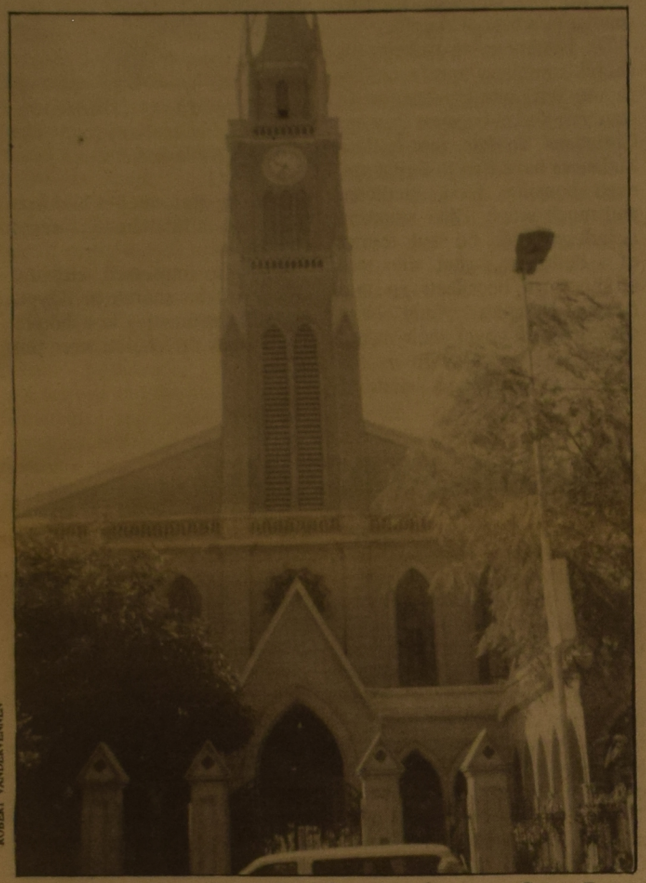
Egyptian Christians present a robust faith



ROBERT VANDERVENNEN

Kasr Dubara Coptic Evangelical Church in downtown Cairo, Egypt.

Robert VanderVennen

CAIRO, Egypt — It was a Thursday evening worship service designed for university students, held at the Kasr Dubara Coptic Evangelical Church in downtown Cairo. The church holds 800 people and it was packed with university-age young people.

I attended the service recently as part of a group of 18 Christian Reformed Church members, 15 of us from Canada. We also attended a Sunday evening service filled with people seated in the foyer and standing outdoors. That service had followed two morning services on a regular work day in Egypt, since the Muslim sabbath comes on Friday. They were long services in the Arabic language, but we were served with simultaneous English translation. The singing at both services, with words on an overhead projector, was vigorous.

Christians are a minority in Egypt, making up perhaps 10 per cent of the population. The country is officially Muslim, and Christians experience certain kinds of discrimination.

Our group, led by Dr. Bastiaan Van Elderen, had the privilege of meeting with the pastor of the church, Rev. Menes Abdul Noor, and also with the retired general secretary of the Egyptian Bible Society, Dr. Adel-Masef Istafanous.

Egyptian Christians are proud that their country hosted the infant Jesus. The church is almost 2000 years old, dating back, tradition says, to evangelistic work by Mark, author of the second gospel. Many early church leaders, such as Athanasius, lived in Egypt.

Formed over an ancient controversy

But in 451 the Council of Chalcedon condemned the position of the Egyptian church on the definition of the two natures of Christ, so the independent Coptic Church was formed.

The Coptic Church missed the Reformation of the 16th century but in the 19th century the Moravians brought some reforming ideas. Early in the present century Presbyterians started a mission program and a new church was formed, the Coptic Evangelical Church, which works closely with the Coptic Orthodox Church. The Evangelical Church has some 300 congregations and 250,000 members.

Egyptian Christians are quite restricted in their ability to evangelize. Their motto is "Jesus is in action in our social action," said Rev. Noor. Christians have worked in village development and in promoting better farming methods. Better family development has been a priority. Christians have an active youth ministry, operating a 20-acre youth camp on the Mediterranean shore in Alexandria. They operate a 71-acre

See **EGYPTIAN** *page 2...*

Kitchener agency uses Christian principles to help people find jobs

Alan Doerksen (with files from the Kitchener-Waterloo Record)

KITCHENER, Ont. — Four churches in Kitchener, Ont., are using biblical principles such as prayer, servanthood and dependability to help people find jobs. The churches work together with the Christian Institute for Employment (CIFE), a program started one year ago by Jim McKinley, a member of Kitchener-Waterloo Christian Fellowship.

McKinley started CIFE soon after losing his job last year as human resources administrator for the Waterloo Region separate school board. After working with the school board for 11 years, McKinley, who is 39, lost his job because of funding cuts and restructuring.

To help make plans for the future, McKinley went on a three-day prayer and fasting retreat and came up with the idea for CIFE.

To get CIFE off the ground, McKinley developed a detailed business plan and used his severance package as "seed money." His church has helped out by offering a rent-subsidized building on church property for him to use. Rev. Ken Miles and the elders of the church have also approved CIFE as an outreach mission. Because of this

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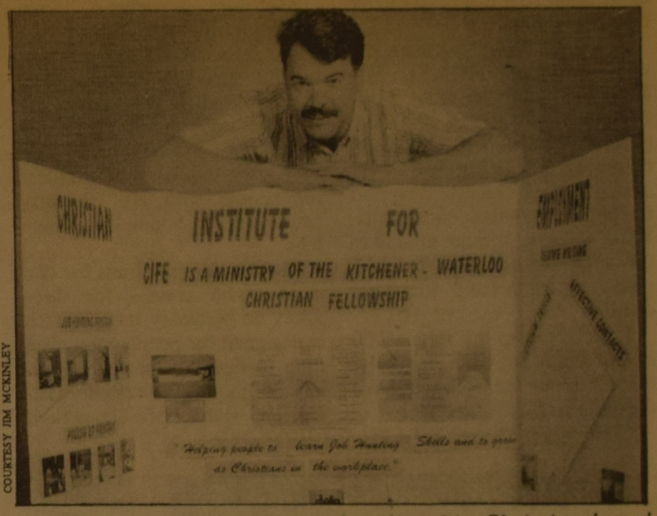

COURTESY JIM MCKINLEY

Jim McKinley with a poster detailing his Christian-based employment program

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News

Egyptian churches focus on social action

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drug rehabilitation centre. They started Egypt's first successful literacy program in a country with a remarkably low literacy level.

Noor's church prepared and distributed cassette tapes from a recent Billy Graham crusade, and have distributed tapes of hymns. They prepared a 500-page book on the life of Christ, which sold 9,000 copies during its first week. So far they have sold 19,000 copies at a subsidized price and would like to have a copy in every home.

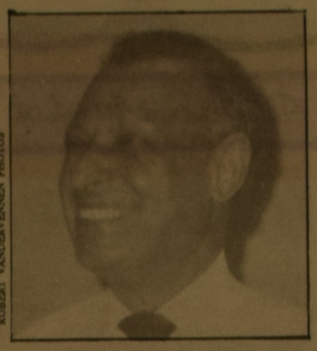
Rev. Noor has a regular Christian radio program which draws 5,000 letters each month and he appreciates the Arabic broadcast ministry of the Back To God Hour. He is often out of the country engaged in his substantial international ministry.

The church operates a vital seminary which trains pastors for other Arabic nations as well as for service in Egypt. The story is told that a certain mahajarah became a Christian and donated hisboat, the *Ibis*, to the church, which became the first campus of the seminary.

New translation of the Bible into Arabic

Now in retirement, Dr. Istafanous is working at a new translation of the Bible into Arabic. The current translation was done in the 1850s by Dr. Cornelius Van Dyk, a medical doctor who learned Hebrew and Greek after working in Egypt. The translation is outdated now and suffers from being a very literal, word for word translation.

There is some opposition to a new translation, though. Muslims accept the Koran in a very literal way, believing that its very words were transmitted by



ROBERT VANDENVENNEN PHOTOS

Rev. Menes Abdul Noor, pastor of the Kasr Dubara Coptic Evangelical Church.

Allah to Mohammed. Muslims complain that Christians have already deleted from the Bible the fact that another prophet was coming, Mohammed, to teach "The Truth." In that atmosphere there is the feeling that a new translation actually means making changes to the Bible.

Some pressure has been put on Dr. Istefanous to scrap the new translation.

The Egyptian Bible Society works in good co-operation with Wycliffe Bible translators, said Dr. Istafanous. Their ministries are complementary, with the Bible Society working at major world languages and Wycliffe working with languages used by smaller numbers of people.

Dr. Istafanous also chairs his church's ministry to refugees escaping religious persecution in southern Sudan because they are Christians. To date, four million Sudanese have fled to Egypt and need housing, food, medicine and much more. Their situation is indescribable, he said, telling of a Sudanese pastor who tore up his own bedsheets so that fleeing refugees would have something to cover their naked bodies. He appealed to us for help for these refugees, many of

Dr. Adel-Masef Istafanous, general secretary of the Egyptian Bible Society.

whom are Reformed Christians from the Christian Reformed Church.

We were impressed with the vigour of the church in Egypt, faithfully witnessing in a culture that wishes the church were not there.

Kitchener churches co-operate in job-finding program

... continued from page 1

connection, CIFE has charitable donation status.

Although he was taking a risk with his own finances, McKinley says, "It all made sense from both a business and faith point of view. We completely believed that what we were doing would receive support from the Christian community. What we offer is quite unique to this area and the need for it is going to be around for quite awhile."

Last October, the first of 20 clients came to CIFE for help. So far, 15 of these clients have found full- or part-time jobs.

Skill development

McKinley offers two programs for job-seekers: the part-time weekend program and the full-time day program. The first program is a two-day session that takes place Friday evening and Saturday all day. McKinley describes it as ideal for people who are currently employed and hoping to change jobs.

The day program runs for two weeks with classes for three hours on weekday mornings. It is designed for people who need time to develop their job-hunting skills, such as resume-writing, and learn more about their role as Christians in the workplace.

"Resumes are oriented primarily to skills, not personality or values," notes McKinley. "But you'll find that most employers hire individuals ahead of skills. Beyond a certain level of ability, the employer is looking for someone who will train well, who will fit in with the company's plan.... At CIFE, we can translate that into character development and Christ-likeness."

Servanthood

Both programs feature a 30-minute worship and prayer service and a Christian living program, which is presented by Rev. Miles from McKinley's church. This program stresses the importance of proper attitudes for Christian employees, such as punctuality, patience, positive work attitudes, and a servant attitude toward the employer.

McKinley explains servanthood this way: "When we teach people to work for their employers 'as unto the Lord,' it does not mean subservience or inferiority at all.... Christ was the least subservient there was, but also the greatest of God's servants."

CIFE also has a follow-up program, in which class members meet together for two hours one day a week after the main programs finish. They hold accountability sessions to make sure no one is falling behind. Each team will meet until everyone on the team has found a suitable job.

A new part of the program now being implemented is a job-finders program, with which McKinley's church and three others in Kitchener are involved. The other churches are Community Christian Reformed Church, Benton Street Baptist Church and West Heights Community Church (Brethren in Christ). Members of these churches are asked to look for and pray for job opportunities, and then call in information to CIFE's job hotline. Then, says McKinley, "we attempt to match people with job opportunities." People looking for work help out as hotline volunteers.

Rev. Harry Bierman, pastor of Community Christian Reformed Church, is on the advisory committee for CIFE. He describes the committee as "kind of a sounding board for Jim to make sure he's on target." The committee also includes 14 other pastors from the Kitchener area.

Bierman says he is "really excited" about CIFE and especially appreciates that it offers "Christian support and encouragement" for people who are looking for work. He describes the new job finding club as "an excellent thing."

One couple from Community CRC, Rob and Cobie Kooistra, had been unemployed and now have found full-time jobs as a result of CIFE's job-finding program. "They were so enthused about it," says Bierman.

Christ in action

In the future, says McKinley, he'd like to see CIFE expand beyond Kitchener to other Canadian cities. He would like to see CIFE develop into a network of church-supported "job-finders clubs."

The CIFE program is not only for Christians, McKinley emphasizes. But, he adds, "When people come, they do hear the Gospel. People will have the opportunity to receive Christ." The program is an opportunity to "show them Christ in action," he says.

At present, McKinley is working as volunteer executive director of CIFE. The cost for each client to go through the program is $300, but clients are only charged $35. To cover other expenses, McKinley encourages clients to contribute to CIFE after they land a job. He also encourages other interested people to donate to CIFE.

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News

Walking the 'way of the cross': Palestinian Christians respond to crisis in the Israeli-occupied West Bank

EAST JERUSALEM, West Bank (MCC) — "For the past few days we have been going through the way of the cross," opens the statement read by local Christians who gathered for prayer on Sept. 29 in response to the violent clashes between Israeli military and Palestinian police and civilians in the West Bank.

Three days of violence, the worst in decades, erupted in late September following the controversial decision by Israeli officials to open an archaeological tunnel located in the Old City of Jerusalem under the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque complex. The Israeli decision is one of many moves to establish exclusive Israeli sovereignty over the city of Jerusalem.

The Dome of the Rock is the place from which Muslims believe Mohammed ascended into heaven and the place where Christians and Jews believe Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac.

In response to the crisis, local patriarchs from the Latin Catholic, Orthodox and Armenian churches, along with bishops and pastors from Anglican and Protestant congregations, issued a statement and gathered local Christians for prayer at St. Anne's Church in the Old City of Jerusalem.

The 800 local Christians who prayed and sang together, lit candles and walked silently along the *Via Dolorosa* from St. Anne's Church to the Church of the Flagellation, near where the disputed tunnel opens into the road. *Via Dolorosa* is the 14-station path Christ followed while carrying his cross through Jerusalem to Calvary.

In a spirit of prayer, local Christians called for peace with justice, and for a Jerusalem shared by Israelis and Palestinians alike.

Meanwhile, 6,000 "Christian Zionists" from around the world gathered in West Jerusalem for annual meetings hosted by the Christian Embassy. They cheered Benjamin Netanyahu as he spoke to them about Israel's claims to absolute sovereignty in the city.

Recognizing that the recent tunnel opening that sparked the clashes was only "the straw that broke the camel's back," the statement issued by local Christians addresses the Palestinians' longstanding grievances. The church leaders called on the Israeli government to return land confiscated from Palestinians, remove roadblocks that effectively close Jerusalem to West Bank Palestinians for worship and commerce, and to fulfil all aspects of the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords.

According to Naim Ateek, Canon of the Anglican Church in Jerusalem, the statement holds a message for the Christian and Muslim communities, as well as for the Israeli government. In comments following the prayer service, Ateek said, "The message for the Christian community is that we, the leaders and the church, are not silent. We can take initiative. We do have a voice. The message for Muslims is that we are all Palestinians — Christians and Muslims. The Muslim community does not stand alone. Every part of the community will do its share in standing for what is right."

Although the decision by Israelis to open the tunnel is particularly provocative for Muslims, the statement by the local church recognizes the impact this decision has for the Christian community as well: "For our Muslim brothers and sisters, the opening of the tunnel is a prelude to the opening of another tunnel that will inevitably lead to breaking into the compound of the (Al-Aqsa) Mosque and the occupation of part of it. Further archaeological claims near the tunnel might also affect Christian sites and restrict pilgrims in the area."

September 29 the "Way of the Cross," was lined with Israeli Defense Force soldiers and Israeli border police armed with wooden clubs. Near Station II of the Cross, Christian pilgrims found the open doors of the disputed tunnel heavily guarded.

'Kosher sound system' patented for rabbis

Alan Doerksen

For rabbis concerned with obeying traditional Sabbath rules, there is now a "kosher sound system."

Rabbis are forbidden to do work on the Sabbath and other holy days. Lighting a fire was traditionally seen as a form of work, and so is pressing electrical buttons today. Because of this, microphones are avoided by many rabbis, but large crowds in synagogues can have difficulty hearing their rabbis speak.

Now a new technology developed for the U.S. Navy has been approved for use in synagogues. Defense Research Technologies of Rockland, Md., has developed a sound system that relies on compressed air to project voices. The navy had wanted a speaker system for aircraft carrier flight decks that didn't use electricity because sparks might ignite plane fuel. The new system wasn't loud enough for aircraft carriers but is more suitable for synagogues.

Although developed in the 1970s, the system wasn't approved until 1993 by the Rabbinical Council of America, which represents 1,000 Jewish congregations in Canada and the U.S.

Last July, the system was patented and has been demonstrated in some synagogues. But one obstacle is its cost: upwards of $20,000 (US) to install it in a synagogue.

Nobel peace prize goes to East Timor pair

Alan Doerksen (with files from CP)

OSLO, Norway — Two leaders of East Timor's movement for independence from Indonesia won the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize this month, which drew international praise but angered the government of Indonesia.

Sharing the $1.12 million (US) prize are Carlos Belo, the Roman Catholic bishop of East Timor, and exiled resistance leader Jose Ramos-Horta. Nobel committee chairperson Francis Sejersted explained that the pair had been awarded the prize "for their work toward a just and peaceful solution to the conflict in East Timor."

Almost one-third of the people of East Timor have died in the past 21 years because of starvation, epidemics, war and terror since Indonesia invaded the island in 1975. Indonesia invaded the island just after Portugal pulled out from its former colony in 1975. The annexation has never been recognized by the UN, which still considers Lisbon to be the administering power.

Belo says of the award, "I see it as a victory for East Timorese... and all Indonesians." Belo added that there is hard work ahead to attain peace and reconciliation. But, he says, "Peace can be achieved through non-violent means."

East Timor is located between the Indonesian island of Java and northwestern Australia. Eighty per cent of the population of 800,000 is Roman Catholic, although Indonesia is mostly Muslim.

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Editorials

Let your good works roll on Reformation Day!

When I was a young boy in the Netherlands, I was a boy scout (*padvinder*) for a few years. We did a lot of fun things, like practising rope knots for unheard-of emergencies and searching for tell-tale signs of a fleeing animal or missing person in the woods. But the main spiritual thing about being a boy scout was that we were supposed to do good deeds because that would make us feel good, improve our character and make us beneficial for others.

I remember volunteering for the task of cleaning a couple of fish for the town's one and only lady of nobility, Dame Vegeling Van Claerbergen. Our boy scout troop regularly used a large hall in her estate, and whether or not her maid was absent that day, or did not want to touch the innards of fish, the request was made for a boy scout to perform this manly deed. I felt proud to be able to do this for such an important person, and it was also notched as a good deed on my record.

Inwardly, though, I knew there was something wrong with this picture of good deeds. My resistance could be traced to my solidly Christian upbringing. An emphasis on good deeds smacked of humanism, don't you know. Besides, as a good boy of the Reformation, I had been told that the Roman Catholic doctrine of good works was bad doctrine. It suggested that we could earn our own salvation, at least partly, by doing good works.

Reformation Day services tended to be somewhat down on good works in those days. They almost left the impression that we need not bother with good works. Just be obedient, we were told. And whatever we did do in the area of helping someone amounted to little more than a piece of dung. So to talk about good works was really taboo.

Let them see your good deeds

But it need not be that way. The Bible talks about good deeds when it urges Christians to "live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God..." (1 Peter 2:12). We're even told to spur each other on toward love and good deeds (Heb. 10:24).

The term "good work(s)" is also used in the Bible, as, for example, when Paul tells the Christians in Ephesus that "we are God's workmanship, created in Jesus Christ to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Eph. 2:10).

The problem with the boy scout movement's concept of doing "at least one good deed a day" is that it creates the feeling that such a deed stands in splendid isolation from God. A person's good deed would go into the world as a lonely missionary to produce what? Other good deeds? A change in someone else's behavior? A better humanity? It is a humanistic concept of self-improvement.

The Roman Catholic view is far more complex than that, of course, but it does take away from the *sola gratia* view of the Scriptures.

I rather like the way this business of good works is put in Ephesians 2:10. Our good works start with being God's workmanship, says Paul. He then mentions that we are created *in Jesus Christ* to do good works, and he ends by reminding us that God prepared in advance that we should do these good works. So it's all God's work in Jesus Christ that makes us do good works. That leaves little room for a declaration of independence as we do our good deeds.

Joining God's rebuilding crew

The beautiful thing about doing good deeds and good works as God's agents is that we enter into the mystery of God's love at work in the world. God is constantly busy bringing about renewal and change for the good. He infiltrates enemy-occupied territory with his army of good workers and "good deeders." We may enlist in this army and so increase God's power to heal and restore. When we enlist, God equips us "for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:17).

It's not up to us to bring about healing and change. We simply carry out orders. God will work it out for some good purpose, which may or may not meet our expectations.

And the point of doing good works is not that people end up praising us. If that is all our good deeds accomplish, they fall short of their God-intended goal. If we do things right, people end up praising our Father in heaven (Matt. 5:16).

For a humanist that is humiliating. For a Christian it is merely humbling. **BW**

Christian Courier

Formerly known as Calvinist Contact
Founded in 1945

An independent weekly that seeks the truth, care and rule of Jesus Christ as it:
— reports on significant happenings in the Christian community and the world;
— expresses opinions that are infused by Scripture and Spirit and rooted in a Reformed perspective;
— provides opportunities for contact and discussion for the Christian community.

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4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON
L2W 1A1, Canada
Tel: (905) 682-8311; fax: (905) 682-8313

A north-westerly call to repentance and submission?

Did you know that the weather-cock originated as an emblem of the Apostle Peter? It seems that one of the popes in the middle of the ninth century ordered that every church steeple should be topped with an inanimate rooster, as an allusion to Peter's three-time denial of the Lord Jesus before the rooster crowed twice.

Did this pope want to remind parishioners of their need to repent and perhaps come to church faithfully? In that case, with a general decline in church attendance, Canadian churches should perhaps install weather-cocks as fast as possible. Or did he want to make a subtle connection between rooster, Peter, pope and thus boost his own papal status?

While we're on the topic of weathervanes, how about this poem called "Wet weather talk" by James Whitcomb Riley (1852-1916)?

It haint no use to grumble and complane
Its jest as cheap and easy to rejoice;
When God sorts out the weather and sends rain,
Why, rain's my choice.

That's called adjusting yourselves to God's will for your life. Of course, wet weather here may refer to the dreary times of life. I would like to think that a weathervane symbolizes this kind of submission. If God's wind blows out of a certain corner, we want to turn with him.

I suppose Peter's repentance led to a similar kind of submission. True repentance usually does. That thought nicely blends the crowing rooster image and the weathervane's function.

What a lot to think about the next time you look up at a steeple rooster! **BW**

Letters

Committee must reflect official church position

Further to the CC story (Oct. 11, 1996) regarding the Classis Hamilton overture to the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada (CCRCC) asking that the council's submission by its Committee for Contact with the Government (CCG), and Mr. Klein's letter, be retracted.

The submission of the CCG and Mr. Klein's letter to Justice Minister Rock are more than mere memos or "Dear Allan" notes. These are submissions by public officials of the Christian Reformed Church and are public statements made about public concerns. As such, these submissions have the equivalent status of any synodical decision, expressing the mind and sentiment of our denomination.

When the CCG and Mr. Klein submitted position papers expressing opinions at variance with the expressed position of our official synod, they acted as a "rump synod." Hence our church council had to act.

Our overture asked that the church *officially* retract what was *officially* submitted to the government. It will not do for a mere apology to be offered.

Furthermore, the Ancaster CRC council also informed the churches of Classis Hamilton that we do *not* endorse the sentiments of the CCG and Mr. Klein as a CRC position on this issue. We publicly distance ourselves from these sentiments.

What is disturbing to discover from the Oct. 11 story is the CCG perception of itself as an advocate for all Canadians. Is this committee taking on the mantle of becoming another Committee for Public Justice (CPJ)? It strikes me that the CCG should speak *to* the government *for* the Christian church. When the CCG tries to act as a facilitator in creating a government policy on human rights legislation it becomes more than the CCRCC intended for it.

Churches and church councils across Canada should be overturing their classes and the CCRCC to bring the CCG, the official voice of the Christian Reformed Church in Canada, in line with *the* official synodical positions of the CRC.

Rev. Bernard DeJonge
Ancaster, Ont.

Below-the-belt talk standard in CRC

So Elizabeth Salomons is offended by an editorial that discussed the sexual urges of single people like herself. To her I say: Welcome to the club! For gays and lesbians in the CRC this is standard fare. Take a look at Synod '73. We see a lofty aim stated at the beginning: "It is well to keep the wider dimension of sexuality in mind... including love, understanding, friendship, the desire to belong to someone and to develop one's humanity in constant companionship with another human being" (p.612).

Yet, if you tabulate all the following references to our sexuality, you discover they hardly *ever* rise above the level of sex urges, sex acts, sexual practice and bodily cravings. A typical sentence about people like me: "For him not to have sex relations is to be deprived of that which his body craves, a deprivation of which he is constantly aware" (p.628). On the following page the report carries on about the "agonizing drive for sexual union." Real pastoral stuff, eh?

The consequences of focusing a discussion of sexuality almost entirely below the belt can be truly bizarre. The topic concerning the morality of gay couples is introduced by casting doubt on whether such a thing can exist: "We ask this question apart from the practical and formidable difficulties of establishing such a relationship and the equally difficult problems of maintaining such an arrangement permanently" (p.630).

Love, it seems, has little to do with it. Then gay relationships are discussed in the context of "personal relief and satisfaction," the manifestation of a "psychological disorder," and are then categorized as "easy indulgence" on the following page. It leaves me feeling very, very frustrated, and I don't mean sexually.

So, to Elizabeth Salomons, and all other single people in the CRC, I extend an open invitation for you to drop over anytime to share a glass of wine with me. I promise not to ask you about your sexual urges if you can refrain from asking about mine.

Don Baxter
Toronto, Ont.

Detail from *The Archangel Michael Leads Adam and Eve Out of Paradise* from *Paradise Lost (1695)*

The Holdfast

I threatened to observe the strict decree
Of my dear God with all my power and might.
But I was told by one, it could not be;
Yet I might trust in God to be my light.
"Then will I trust," said I, "in him alone."
Nay, ev'n to trust in him, was also his:
We must confess, that nothing is our own.
"Then I confess that he my succour is":
But to have nought is ours, not to confess
That we have nought. I stood amazed at this,
Much troubled, till I heard a friend express,
That all things were more ours by being his.
What Adam had, and forfeited for all,
Christ keepeth now, who cannot fail or fall.

George Herbert (1593-1633)

Christian Courier

An independent weekly with a Reformed perspective.
Member of Canadian Church Press and Evangelical Press Association.
Canada mail: Publications Mail Registration No. 0451. Postage paid at St. Catharines, Ont. Postmaster: send address changes to Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, Ont. L2W 1A1.
U.S. mail: Christian Courier (USPS 518-090). Second-class postage paid at Lewiston, NY. Postmaster: send address changes to Christian Courier, Box 110, Lewiston, NY 14092.

Subscriptions: (effective Feb. 1, 1995)	**Canada** (GST incl.)	**U.S.A.** (GST free)
one year (44 issues)	$43.50	$35.00 U.S.
two years (88 issues)	$82.00	$66.00 U.S.
three years (132 issues)	$123.00	$99.00 U.S.
overseas one year	$135 airmail $85.00 surface mail	

Advertising deadlines: display advertising: Wednesday, 8:30 a.m.; classified advertising: Thursday, 8:30 a.m. All deadlines are for the following week's issue. See classified pages for more details.
(ISSN 1192-3415) Published weekly on Fridays except for March 1, April 12, May 31, June 21, July 26, Aug. 23, Oct. 4 and Dec. 27, by Calvinist Contact Publishing Limited.
All correspondence should be addressed to: 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, Ont. L2W 1A1, Tel.: 905-682-8311 or fax: 905-682-8313
PRINTED IN CANADA
This tabloid contains recycled paper.

Family

Changes in life need good rituals

Hilda J. Born

When the Israelites crossed over Jordan they'd seen a great reversal of a natural law. This enabled them to come to a strange new land. In order to come to terms with such a dramatic life change Joshua ordered the observance of certain God-directed rituals (Joshua 4 and 5).

First was the carrying of rocks for the creation of the monument. This was to stand as a visible reminder of the event that had just taken place. Further recognition of change was the circumcision ritual. This physical act and healing time gave space for reflection on the new era in their history. After recovering from this surgery there was the need to observe the Passover. It gave opportunity for spiritual acknowledgement of salvation from the enemy tyrant Egypt. After they began to eat the food of the new land, the provision of manna ceased.

By observing certain spiritual rituals in our own lives it helps us to come to terms with our past and go forward.

The other side

"Crossing the Jordan" has become a symbol of major changes in life's journey. Sometimes they are premeditated, such as a move to another town or job transfer. Like many of the ordinary Israelites, we don't always have an option in the upheavals in our lives. Life's circumstances simply put us on Jordan's banks and we'd better adjust to this other side.

The transition to the new environment can certainly be smoothed if we can fall back on rituals for coping with the immediate. At least they help until we're back on our feet again.

The three-step ritual observance by the Israelites is a helpful lesson to be applied when major life changes take place. It gives time to absorb the reality and heal from the abrupt changes that confront us.

By putting up permanent markers, whether pictures, videos, headstones, or whatever, we are reassured that a memorable milestone will not be forgotten.

The physical cutting away of circumcision indicates some actual pain. It was a step of obedience in the Old Testament. Riddance of unnecessary practices, though painful, may be best for a more healthful future.

The spiritual recounting of the cost of deliverance from sin and pagan corruption (as in the Passover) needs observance and celebration with joy.

Then a new phase of life's journey can again be tackled. Let's head for Jericho!

Sometimes there is similar temerity as one stands on the bank of a new year. An encouraging ritual of my childhood was attendance at a watch-night service. Oral accounts were given of the overcomings of the previous year. Some tearful confessions were always included of the journey's struggle to get to the brink of the stream.

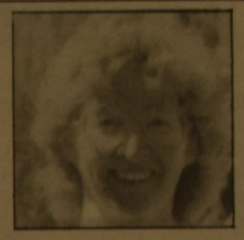
A prescribed pattern

When long-winded, boring accounts were included it was much like the Israelites endless desert wanderings. Eventually we were ready for communion with one another at the first Sunday of the New Year. But this had been preceded by a week of intensive prayer.

Participation in these home-based prayer and Bible studies followed a prescribed pattern. Everyone who was "converted" or born-again participated. As soon as a child was old enough to accept Christ in his or her life, the child was also able and expected to pray publicly with the gathered adults.

These three rituals at the start of each year prepared our little Christian community for new adventure and any unseen foes on the horizon.

Hilda Born lives in Abbotsford, B.C.



Marian den Boer

It's a girl!

Christina Elizabeth den Boer
Born on October 4, 1996
(7 weeks early)
This is a poem written for her by the den Boers' eldest daughter.

Christina

Just tell me you're not pregnant!
There are already five of us.
Me, Alison, Paul, and Michelle and then Amanda —
the "surprise" of six years past.
How archaic — six kids in eighteen years.
Ever heard of birth control?
No apology from you: "The world needs Christians."
When I'm forty-four, I'll have a career, not another kid;
Business suits and bi-daily workouts, not maternity clothes.

Due on my 18th birthday, the little upsurper.
The pregnancy makes you whaley and waddly, yet you chuckle.
How inconvenient, two term papers and a baby due all at once.

But impatience clothes me, chafing like a too-small coat.
Boy or girl? For a name — Eric, Elizabeth?

False contractions, eh? Like last time.
Labor, already?
A new sister?

Christina Elizabeth — a doll-sized infant, still and perfect.
The summer heat of teenage conceit, anger,
impatience, and reluctance
dissipates in the gentle rain of love and wonder
at this tiny person with eyes yet to see the world,
with clenching fists and beating heart.
She couldn't be... could she?
Tell me she's ours.

The den Boers live in Hamilton, Ont. Baby Christina, being seven weeks premature, is still in hospital "to learn a few basic things like how to drink on her own," says Marian. It is hoped she will be home by the time this column is in print. "Isn't life wonderful?" her mother adds.

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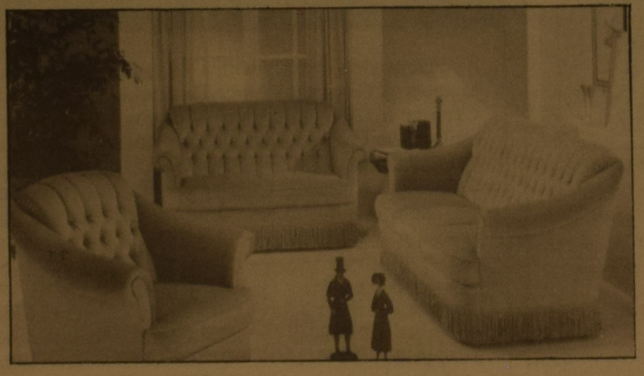

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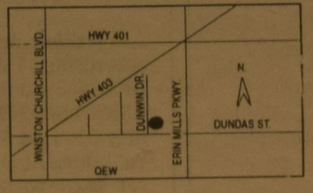

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ARTS & MEDIA

Fly Away Home

A delightful wild goose chase

Marian Van Til

Stars Jeff Daniels, Dana Delaney, Anna Paquin. Directed by Carroll Ballard.

Fly Away Home is a delightful family movie with spectacular photography and a heartwarming story about a girl and her geese. The film is loosely based on 10-years of goose-migration experiments conducted by Canadian artist/writer/bird-lover Bill Lishman.

Lishman used an ultra-light airplane (a sort of motorized glider) to teach resident geese in Ontario long-forgotten migration patterns of their species. Just-hatched goslings would imprint on him and then, thinking he was their mother, would follow him everywhere — including into the air and all the way to South Carolina. Geese learn to recognize landscapes as they fly, and in the spring the geese would return to Lishman's home in rural Ontario, northeast of Toronto.

From the common to the rare

Lishman started his experiments with the ubiquitous Canada geese, with the eventual hope of being able to work with endangered species that might be able to be saved by such actions. In fact, he is now working with sandhill and whooping cranes. (Lishman's book about his goose experiments, called *Father Goose* was published early this year by Little, Brown Canada.)

Anna Paquin as Amy, with a feathered friend.

This film was directed by Canadian Carroll Ballard (*The Black Stallion; Never Cry Wolf*) but it doesn't purport to tell Lishman's story — it focusses on the geese, and on a fictional 13-year-old daughter the film gives to Lishman.

Actor Jeff Daniels with Bill Lishman

In the film, his wife and he are separated and she lives in New Zealand with their daughter, Amy, played by New Zealander Anna Paquin; that's the reason given for Amy's New Zealand accent.

The story kills off Lishman's wife in a car accident in the first two minutes so that the Lishman character can be given a love interest and so Amy can come and live with her father.

She is understandably ambivalent about him — she doesn't really know him, since her parents separated when she was only three. And of course, she's grieving for her mother and thus reacts coolly to her father's woman friend. But caring for the geese has a way of getting all of them to drop their defenses, as caring for animals almost always does. And familial bonds get strengthened.

At two points in the film the issue of the environment versus subdivision development enters. Amy finds a clutch of goose eggs as a result of some trees and brush being bulldozed next door to her father's property. Amy and her family (there's an uncle too) are eventually at odds with a conservation officer as well, who tells them that captive geese must have their wings clipped. He's only doing his job. Since no one has ever taught geese how to migrate before, releasing human-imprinted birds into the wild doesn't seem to be an option.

Geese are the stars

The story has enough warmth and drama to keep an audience's attention, but it's the geese who steal the show. While the characters of Amy and her father are well-drawn, one might wish for less stereotyping in minor characters like the conservation officer (he goes from good guy to bad guy faster than you can say, "Father Goose"). But there's some gentle sending-up of stereotypes too. Amy's uncle is a a kind of "hoser" *a la* the MacKenzie brothers. And the U.S. Air Force officer whom we expect to be a hard-nosed, shoot-'em-up type turns out to be a fatherly, jovial guy who poses for pictures with Amy and her dad after they've made an unauthorized landing at his air base in Niagara Falls, New York.

If the plot is predictable, this is still a captivating, gentle-spirited film which has something in it for everyone in the family.

A helpful guide for dealing with the media

Marian Van Til

Making the News: A Media Relations Manual for Non- profit Organizations

By John Longhurst.

Winnipeg: Windflower Communications. ISBN 0-895308-19-4. 75 pp. $6.99 (Cdn), $5.49 (US).

If you're part of a school, church, social service agency or other organization that needs to get its message out to the broader world, this booklet will be extremely helpful.

It will be particularly so for Christians because its author is an informed Christian — John Longhurst directs media relations for the Mennonite Central Committee Canada — and because many Christian organizations don't have the resources to hire professional media relations personnel and aren't sure about how to use or relate to the media.

Longhurst explains how the print and television media work, and a few rules by which they live: "The media strives to be impartial; the media assumes that the public has a right to know; the media strives to be objective; the media is interested in what is happening now; you have no control over the final product."

Longhurst stresses that an organization should have a media plan, and will normally want to cultivate a relationship with *local* newspapers (and TV and radio stations).

You need an angle

There are several reasons why material about an agency or organization doesn't get published: submitted press releases are badly written, uninteresting or too long; there's no local-interest angle; the information is not timely; there's no actual event involved; more important news may pre-empt your news.

Longhurst stresses the importance of developing and maintaining regular contact with the press (getting to know specific people in specific jobs) both for your own benefit and so that they come to know and trust your organization. He gives tips on how to write a good press release. He also has excellent advice for talking to reporters (you're "on the record" the minute a reporter calls you and identifies him- or herself), on doing interviews, and on how to handle things when the media gets something wrong: "First, make sure you have a legitimate complaint. Is it a major error on which the main point of the report hinges, or is it peripheral?"

Airing bad news

From this reviewer's point of view as an editor who deals with the kind of organizations to whom Longhurst addresses this book, his most helpful advice is that about writing press releases, about dealing with media mistakes, and especially about "sharing bad news."

Oddly, many Christian organizations don't have great track records when it comes to being forthright with the media (even the Christian media) when a crisis hits. But "to hope nobody will notice and that the problem will go away," in Longhurst's words, is not in anybody's best interests, least of all the organization itself.

Longhurst advocates the "open and forthright" approach, in many cases going to the media before they come to you. Not only does an agency benefit from being honest, but "a public relations axiom holds that the organization which breaks a story first gets to set the margins and terms of discussions. That is, people (including reporters) respond to the news you share — not the other way around. You are in control. At the same time, sharing bad news indicates that you are treating the matter seriously."

Longhurst also encourages organizations to make use of letters-to-the-editor and op/ed pages in newspapers to get their points of view across. He doesn't write much specifically about the Christian media, or about how they approach (or should approach) news somewhat differently than the secular media. He does note that there are many Christians working in the secular media and suggests that a Christian organization should not assume that the secular media will be hostile to their cause.

The $6.99 spent on this book will be a tiny price to pay for a wealth of information which could greatly benefit your organization.

Church

Bible League publishes first-ever Burmese study Bible

SOUTH HOLLAND, Ill. (TBL) — "I got goose bumps when I saw it," says Saw Tun Win, national director of The Bible League's office in Burma (now known as Myanmar). After three years of compiling, gathering permissions, translating various study notes, typesetting and raising funds, The Bible League has published and printed the first study Bible in the Burmese language.

The Bible was first translated into Burmese by Adoniram Judson of the American Baptist Missionary Union. Judson, America's first foreign missionary, arrived in Burma in 1813. He finished translating the Bible into Burmese in 1840. Judson also developed a Burmese-English dictionary which is still sold in Burmese bookstores today.

Judson's Bible translation forms the heart of The Bible League's study Bible. The entire Bible was re-typeset in Burmese using new fonts that had to be created from scratch. Notes and helps were translated into Burmese from the English version of the Topical Study Bible, used by permission from Zondervan.

There are over three million Christians in Myanmar. While the Bible has been available in Burmese since the time of Judson, this is the first Burmese study Bible ever produced. The translating, editing and typesetting were a co-operative work that included the efforts of The Bible League, the Myanmar Baptist Convention and the Burmese staff of Campus Crusade.

Printing of the Burmese study Bible was completed early this month, and most of the 10,000-piece print run was shipped directly to Myanmar's borders, where local church workers will come at their own expense to pick them up. A few samples were sent to The Bible League's office in South Holland, Ill., and arrived the day before Saw Tun Win's visit.

Although he is thrilled about the completion of this project, Tun Win believes that all 10,000 copies will be gone in less than a month. "My country has been waiting for this, and they are eager for it," he says.

The Bible is an especially important evangelistic tool among the Buddhist population of Myanmar. Buddhists, who are taught to respect religious books of any kind, have great reverence for the Bible. The Bible League has recorded numerous testimonies of former Buddhists who were converted to Christianity when they began reading the Bible.

Danes open to receiving Bibles

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (EP) — A half-million copies of the New Testament in Danish were given away in September — one each to about 98 per cent of the households in Copenhagen. The massive ecumenical project was timed to coincide with the celebration of the Danish capital's role as a 1996 European Cultural Capital.

Morten Aagaard, general secretary of the Danish Bible Society, told Ecumenical News International that project planners predicted that 10 to 20 per cent of Copenhagen's households would refuse a free copy of the New Testament. "In fact, we have just found out that only one or two per cent of the households said, 'No, thanks,'" he said. "Because of that, we had to print an extra 30,000 copies." Non-Danish households were told how they could receive a New Testament in their own language at no cost. The project attracted wide cross-denominational support. Households accepting Bibles were also given a letter listing 600 follow-up events, ranging from concerts to Bible studies. The entire project cost about $500,000.

German evangelicals hold 'Web' competition

HANOVER, Germany (EP) — The world's first international competition for Christian resources on the Internet has been launched in Germany. The annual competition is sponsored by the Evangelical Church in Germany and by the Association for Protestant Media. It is open to anybody with a Christian presence on the World Wide Web — The user-friendly side of the Internet which permits the transmission of text, images, sound and even video.

An 11-member jury will award a first-place prize of $2,000. The award is called the WebFish, named for the fish symbol used by early Christians. "We hope to be a Protestant voice on the Internet, helping to make links to Christians in the worldwide church and building up a network with many addresses, said Bishop Klaus Engelhardt, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Church in Germany.

For more information, send e-mail to webfish@ekd.de, or point your web browser to www.ekd.de/webfish/english.html.

NIV goes interactive online

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (EP) — Zondervan Publishing House, publisher of the popular New International Version (NIV) of the Bible, will be teaming up with Compton's, a leading multimedia publisher, to create an interactive NIV Bible on CD-ROM for computers running the Windows operating system. The King James Version multimedia Bible published by Compton's is the best-selling computer Bible. The new NIV version, which will be available in November, will include interactive searching and cross-referencing, study helps, a Bible dictionary, and a commentary, along with photographs, audio and video clips.

Lotteries collect more than churches do

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) — Americans spend more on lotteries than they give to their churches, according to a report by the Associated Baptist Press. U.S. Census Bureau figures show that $26.6 billion was spent by Americans on lotteries in 1994. Figures from the *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches* show that in the same period total contributions to churches by American congregations were $19.6 billion.

Dead Sea Scrolls available in English

CINCINNATI, Ohio (EP) — An English-language translation of the Dead Sea Scrolls will be published in November, giving non-scholars access to the ancient texts. In addition to some of the oldest-known fragments of the Bible, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation* includes extra-biblical material, including previously unpublished psalms attributed to King David, a story exploring God's reason for asking Abraham to sacrifice his son, and the last words of such Jewish patriarchs as Joseph and Judah. Access to the scrolls was tightly controlled for decades after their discovery in 1947, and became more open only a few years ago.

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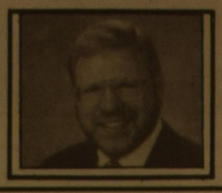


* Wayne Brouwer
Andrew Kuyvenhoven
Laura Smit
Al Wolters

Absolute truths

"We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check" (James 3:2).

In Susan Howatch's novel, *Absolute Truths*, the main character is a "perfect" man. Oh, to be sure, Charles Ashworth had his little peculiarities in his younger years, and he needed the guidance of Jon Darrow to help him understand himself. But, all in all, he's a portrait of humanity at its best — sound and sleek in body, steady in temperament, keen in intellect, faithful in relationships, and unwavering in morality. He is the consummate churchman. It is no accident of fate that has placed him in the high post of Bishop of Starbridge.

Magnificent suffering

Just as he faces off against those in the church and society who seem to be changing the morals of culture, his wife suddenly dies of a blood clot in the brain. Charles is with her at the time and watches in horrified helplessness as she slumps to the floor, lifeless.

His world is shattered. Still, no one will hold him accountable for his depression and excessive drinking, since these are the normal temporary responses to such a loss. He is still a perfect man, perfect even in his grief.

It is so easy to presume that strength of character and moral uprightness are the goals of faith and life. But there is something about love which stands just above them.

Then, as he finally clears their bedroom of his wife's clothes and cosmetics, Charles discovers her journal. For some years she had been penning her secret thoughts. It began as an attempt at prayer: sorting through the turmoil inside in order to present herself to God honestly.

Cracks in the paint

Some of the pages retrace the minutiae of life — meetings and schedules, changing seasons, weather and fashions. However, woven throughout is a remarkable analysis of Charles' own psyche. He wasn't aware that she knew him so perceptively. More than that, he didn't realize that there were flaws in his own character that kept her and their two sons at a (dis)respectful distance. Formally, his life was in tune with the "absolute truths" of Christian behavior. Yet somewhere in the firmness of his propriety he had failed to grasp the one essential absolute truth of God: it is grace, not pedantic obedience, that drives love.

Here is the greatest rub for those who are mature in life and faith. It is so easy to presume that strength of character and moral uprightness are the goals of faith and life. Certainly they are admirable, and obedience to God is a high value.

Flying lessons

But there is something about love which stands just above them. A dear friend once explained it like this: in a dream he saw a marvelous apparatus of yellow silk billowing in the breezes next to a cliff. It was a transportation device of some kind, though he couldn't see either engines or supports. Like a magical tent, it floated in space.

Inside was a man whose face seemed so familiar and friendly he knew that this was an intimate acquaintance. However, he couldn't seem to remember how they were associated, nor the man's name. The man, with a smile of warmth, invited him to step off the cliff into the contrivance, and be carried on a delightful journey in the yellow tent.

But my friend was so intrigued by the device itself that he wanted to try it on his own. *He* wanted to pilot the magical airship. So when he entered the craft, he fought the man for control, and pushed him out onto the cliff. Unfortunately, just as my friend felt the power of flight swell in his commanding grasp, the entire yellow tent began to collapse in on itself, and plummet to disaster below.

No matter what he did, he couldn't make the "machine" fly! He cried out for help, and suddenly the man he had pushed out reappeared at his side. And just as suddenly the airship began to billow and slow its freefall. Soon they were soaring together.

Without a further thought my friend knew that it was Jesus. And he also knew why Jesus said to him, "Don't you know that the power to fly is not found in the 'machine' nor in your skills as a pilot, but in me?"

If someone close to me were to pen a secret study of my life, I wonder if they would be able to detect that "absolute truth" expressed.

Wayne Brouwer is senior pastor at Harderwyk Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Mich.

Chinese pastor defends refusal to register house church

HONG KONG (Compass) — One of China's most famous house church leaders, Alan Yuan, has explained in detail to *Compass* why he voluntarily closed his 100-strong Beijing house church on August 4 rather than register it with the government. He was "theologically unwilling" to register and it was "practically impossible," as his church could not meet three key conditions for registration.

Speaking from his one-bedroom apartment in Beijing, the 82-year-old leader said, "I have not registered now for the same reason I did not join the Three Self church in the 1950s — because politics and religion should not mix."

'Yoking with unbelievers'

Visited by Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB) officials twice and pressed to register, he said that "to register means the RAB and the Three Self church would have control over us. Since neither agency has any believers, we cannot yoke with unbelievers."

To register, one must have a specific place of worship. Yuan said, "My room is not our church...; we meet lots of places." Second, there must be an approved pastor, but Yuan insists, "I am not the pastor of this church, we are all pastors." Third, all financial transactions within the church must be reported to the Religious Affairs Bureau for approval, to which Yuan said, "We have no finances in this group. No one receives money from anywhere, and we pay no one." Consequently he said, "We do not constitute a church that can register under these conditions."

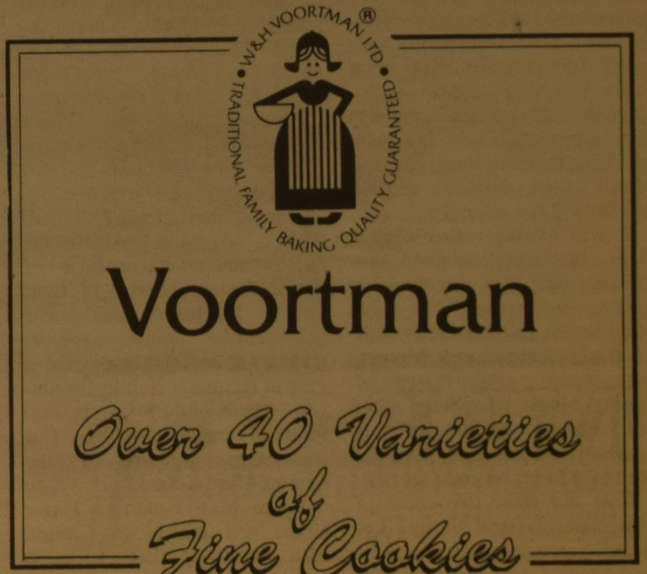
Jailed for 22 years for refusing to join the Three Self church, Yuan did admit that not all house church leaders shared his theological conviction that to register and become Three Self was to "yoke with unbelievers." He said, "It is true that some house churches have registered, especially in the countryside where they hope they will be left alone."

Uncertain possibilities

Since December 1995, the Chinese government has instructed the RAB to ask every religious group meeting without official permission to obtain that permission by registering.

For house churches, that automatically means coming under the supervision of the Three Self Patriotic Movement — China's official Protestant church.

However, a senior RAB official confided, "If they register and come under a TSPM church with an evangelical pastor, they are likely to be left alone. But if their local TSPM church does not have evangelical leadership, they could be seriously interfered with, even closed down or have their pastor replaced."



Feature

Where nations meet

... It was Music, with a capital letter, that had conjoined this unlikely pair...

Herman de Jong

They had become friends, Shirley Dobrowolski and Martje Ufkes. They were so unlike each other that the other residents of Peace Manor could hardly imagine them together. The tall, buxom Polish woman and tiny Martje Ufkes.

Shirley had entered the home seven years ago. It soon became evident that she spoke five languages and a mouthful of Dutch. What more could one ask in a seniors home where the majority of residents hailed from the Low Lands? Shirley had heard about the home's cleanliness, its super-friendly staff and its excellent meals from her Dutch-Canadian cleaning lady. Although a Roman Catholic, she had not hesitated to become part of a then mainly Reformed community. Religious differences often lose their sting when one moves closer to eternity.

Martje Ufkes was ninety years old and the thinnest and tiniest woman in the home. Yet she was not bent-over with age. She walked as straight as an elder coming out of a consistory room. Still, were it not for Martje's most excellent feature, her wizened elf-like face, she would go almost unnoticed. Take away the wrinkles and you could see why Pieter Ufkes, who first farmed 20 acres close to Scheemda and later 200 acres around Clinton, became attracted to her.

Shirley and Martje. What had brought these two women, so different in upbringing, schooling and religion, together? Had they been attracted to each other by these vast differences, as happens in marriages sometimes? Had they felt pity for each other? Had the large worldly-wise Polish woman felt empathy for the shy wisp of a farmer's wife who spoke English haltingly and was happiest when she could fall back on her mother tongue? Had Martje seen Shirley's ethnic loneliness? No, no, no!

It was Music, with a capital letter, that had conjoined this unlikely pair. Are you thinking psalms and hymns? No way! They listened to the sturdy stuff of Bach, Handel and Mozart. After morning coffee the two of them, Martje hanging onto Shirley's arm, would trundle off to Martje's room and listen to music for hours on end.

How did these two come to appreciate classical music? Let me tell you a wee bit about their backgrounds and you will understand.

Shirley had studied piano at the Conservatory in Warsaw and had almost entered the European performer's circuit when her physician husband decided to move to Canada. Dr. Dobrowolski became a well-known physician in the Sarnia area. Shirley became the mother of four instead of a concert pianist. Naturally, her accomplishments did not go unnoticed in Lambton County, but sadly, the world did not become a concert stage for Shirley Dobrowolski.

How different was Martje's past! All her life Martje had carried her father's legacy. He had been a farmhand but also the not-so-amateurish organist of the Reformed church of their village. He loved good music and spent his meagre savings to take his older children twice a year to Harmony Hall in Groningen where oratorios were performed, conducted by Cor Batenburg, organist of the famous Martini Kerk.

When Martje married Pieter Ufkes and moved to Canada with him, their first expensive acquisition had been a Philips radio/record player. Pieter Ufkes could jump high or low, but Martje had to have that beautiful, shiny "instrument." Then when they sold the farm and there was more money in the bank than ever before, she persuaded Pieter to buy a superb stereo set and CD player, for she had heard that CDs sounded infinitely better than her old records and tapes did. Wow! Eighty watts per speaker — just in case she experienced more hearing loss than she already had.

When she moved to Peace Manor the roof of that peaceful place almost blew off. The director received so many complaints that he had to do his daily work after hours. The whole home seemed filled with the "Hallelujah" chorus and Bach arias. In the carpentry shop downstairs, Mr. Frater turned off his country music; the two so-different music styles just didn't mix too well.

The director was a wise man. He fitted Martje with earphones. Martje couldn't get over it! When she listened to her CDs now it was as if the orchestra and choir were playing right in her head. Shirley's room contained a stereo set too, but they had soon discovered that it was "not as goot" as Martje's. Maybe the farmer had done better than the doctor in their new country.

After morning coffee with the other residents, Shirley would pull Martje up from the depths of the sofa and they'd walk arm in arm to Martje's room. This morning it would be the *St. Matthew Passion*, tomorrow maybe Haydn's *Creation* or *The Seasons*. But always 15 minutes of piano music! Having listened to an oratorio for two or three hours they would discuss the various soloists.

"Shirley, this bass is just as goot as Henk Smit with the Concertgebouw Orchestra. You can say what you want!"

"Oh no, Martje, how can you say that? He sounded so flat! Obviously he didn't use his diaphragm to push enough air through his lungs."

"You, always with your 'diafraam,'" sighed Martje. "Well, let's play some organ music; we can't fight about that. But I still like Henk Smit better, heur!"

"I'd rather listen to that new Russian pianist," said Shirley.

"Tingeling," said Martje, "give me organ music anytime."

One morning some months ago, they again were sitting in Martje's bed-sitting room with its windmill embroidery on the one wall and an aerial photo of the Ufkes farm on the other. The small oak tea table was just large enough for the plaster heads of Bach and Beethoven, Martje's prized possessions. She knew she would meet Bach in heaven. About Beethoven, she wasn't so sure — he with his "Alle Menschen wirden Bruder." Not much about God in the final chorus of the *Ninth Symphony!* Pity, for if any music made her heart beat faster, it was the last part of that symphony. But this morning they were not listening to music. They talked about the old man who had moved in last week.

The newcomer sat in a wheelchair, a tall, dignified gentleman with an unusual mane of white hair. Mr. Frater had volunteered to wheel him to the coffee room every morning and had tried to get him to talk. But Werner Von Holzhaus did not talk. He smiled

and smiled, but did not talk. Actually, Frater could have known, for Werner's room was in that section of the home where residents who suffered from Alzheimer's disease lived. Werner even had to be helped to bring the coffee cup to his lips.

"He looks so..., so different," Martje had whispered when she first saw him.

"I think he could be an artist, maybe a famous tenor or painter," said Shirley, holding her mouth close to Martje's hearing aid, but not so close that her remarks couldn't be overheard.

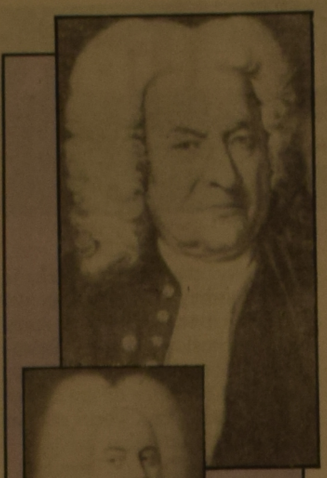
Soon it was whispered from room to room that a famous artist was now living in Peace Manor. To seek the truth about Werner Von Holzhaus, Shirley strode firmly to the director's office. Most residents were a bit awed in Shirley's presence, but not the always-smiling director.

"No, no, it's confidential information, Mrs. Dobrowolski, let's leave it at that, hey? But he hasn't been a doctor, if that's what you're fishing for." And Shirley, tossing her silver hair defiantly, could leave none the wiser.

That's why she dug up her *International Performers* book. Maybe Werner had been a famous singer. She took the book along to Martje's room and put it on Martje's footstool, for the small dining room table was just a smidgen too high for little Martje.

"What's that now?" asked Martje.

Magnifying glass in Shirley's hand, the two women bent over the book. It was written in English and it always took Martje ages to get the real meaning of the words. Then they saw it. Martje followed the sentences with her tiny finger and read out loud: *Werner Von Holzhaus. Bass. Born 1910, Stuttgart, Germany. Berlin Academy of Music, Amsterdam Conservatory. New York Opera School. First performance: as Christus in Bach's St. Matthew Passion, Utrecht. Discovered by Willem Mengelberg, he became famous for his interpretation of the Schubert Lieder. Sang mostly oratorio in Western Europe before World War Two. Moved to America in 1938 and after attending the New York Opera School, joined the Los Angeles Opera. He gave few guest performances outside California, where he became known as one of the state's finest basses. His career ended abruptly in 1970. Moved to Canada in 1985 to live with his son, Jacob Von Holzhaus. Residence unknown.*



... They listened to the sturdy stuff of Bach, Handel and Mozart...

"Oh! oh!" sighed Martje, "I can hardly believe it, Shirley! How come such a famous man comes to Peace Manor? We are, ja, such hordinary peoples here."

They would soon find out. The next day Mr. Frater was not the one who Herr Von Holzhaus' wheelchair pushed, but a woman in a beautifully tailored coat. Shirley and Martje, arm in arm, had to step a bit sideways to let them pass. The woman turned around and said, "Dank u wel, hoor." Shirley's mouth fell open.

"Just like I thought, Martje, he's got a Dutch daughter-in-law. Don't you people call that a 'schone dochter'?" Martje smiled. Shirley could say such crazy things!

* * * *

A week later. Thursday afternoon hymn sing. The man who usually played the organ did not show up.

"Shirley," said the head nurse, "you'll have to help us out again." Shirley's arthritic fingers couldn't manage piano keys anymore, but organs play somewhat more lightly. Under feeble applause she seated herself on the organ bench like a full-figured Wagner heroin. Nurses brought in several Alzheimer patients. Some of them remembered the psalms of their youth and sang along beautifully.

Through the open door Shirley saw Mr. Frater pushing Werner's wheelchair. Suddenly, something popped up in her brain.

"Be back in a jiffy," she called out to the headnurse, "I have to get something from my room."

Martje knew exactly what Shirley would get. Between the Dutch psalms and the English hymns she usually played a solo, and the only solo her arthritic fingers could manage was the *Largo* by Handel.

The slow stately Genevan psalms were over. Shirley twisted on the organ bench and smiled at Martje. "Now I will play for you a Handel piece," she said.

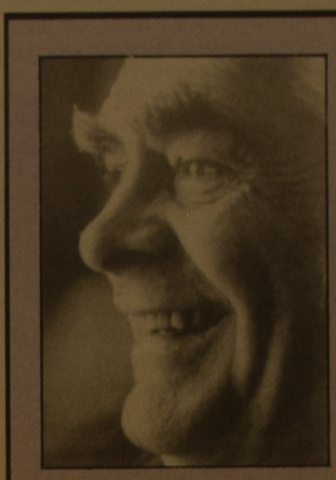
Oh, oh, thought Martje, *here we go again, I've heard that Largo now a hundred times.* She bent her head in both hands, making herself even smaller. Then she looked up in wonderment. Would you believe it? Shirley was playing something else. Such a familiar piece. She'd also listened to it nearly a hundred times. Yes, she got it! *Messiah* — but how did the words go?

Strangely, Shirley stopped and started all over again as if she wanted to give Martje a chance to discover the words. Ah, now she knew! "The trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised!" The next word she had never been able to pronounce. Something like "cor... cor...," and then "bable." Why was Shirley starting all over again? Couldn't she play the rest of the piece? Martje almost felt ashamed for her friend.

Martje lifted her head and looked at Shirley. How she loved that woman. First it had just been listening together to music, but soon they had begun to talk about their pasts and their different faith. About the glory awaiting them in heaven with Jesus. Shirley knew that her only salvation lay in Jesus, and not in Mary and all these other things. O yes, Martje had made sure of that!

Suddenly a still rich bass voice filled the small chapel. Instantly Martje knew what Shirley had been up to. She wanted Werner to recognize and sing an aria which he must have sung a couple of hundred times.

Heads slowly turned around. Never had they heard such beautiful singing in this chapel.



...But Werner Von Holzhaus did not talk. He smiled and smiled, but did not talk...

Martje turned around too and saw Werner sit straight in his wheelchair, eyes shining and hands beating the rhythm on the siderails of his chair.

Flawlessly he sang through the long passage of sixteenth notes on the word "changed." Martje's eyes filled with tears. She was back in Harmony Hall in Groningen where she had heard the Messiah for the very first time. The loud trumpet calls mixed with the thundering voice of the bass had almost scared her. She remembered how she had hid her face in Father's rough winter coat. Father had taken her small hand in his hard, large laborer's hand and held it till the aria was over.

Incorruptible: the dead shall be raised incorruptible! Suddenly Martje knew the word, and its full meaning; it filled her with great joy. All of them, even Werner Von Holzhaus — *incorruptible*!

The voice trailed away and stopped as a steam locomotive halts at the end station. It was so still. Then applause burst out, applause which seemed too loud for their feeble, blue-veined hands. Werner didn't acknowledge their praise. He just smiled and smiled, looking into nothingness.

... Shirley became the mother of four instead of a concert pianist...

Herman de Jong is an organist, cabinet maker and writer living in retirement in Jordan, Ont.

Feature

Was the Reformation a mistake?

Klaas Runia (translated from the Dutch by Bert Witvoet)

In 1992, Klaas Runia, who was then the editor of the Dutch weekly* Christelijk Weekblad, *wrote the following article which CC condensed. Runia's piece came about after he had read another article in an American Roman Catholic magazine whose author had been Christian Reformed and had studied at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich., and is now a well-known Catholic author and theologican. The Catholic author defended the thesis that the Reformation of the 16th century had been a colossal mistake.

Runia writes:

The article starts with the sentence: The Protestant Reformation began when a Catholic monk discovered a Catholic doctrine in a Catholic book." The monk was Martin Luther, the doctrine was the justification through faith and the book was the Bible! Thus the deepest schism in the Christian church came about through a "misunderstanding."

Good works

What, in fact, had happened? The young monk, Luther, who by nature was impulsive and pessimistic, could not rid himself of his guilt feelings, in spite of all his good works and his doing of penance. His confessor gives him the advice to read the letter to the Romans. There Luther discovers the great truth that God has already forgiven his sins based on Christ's work. The password for Luther and the whole Reformation becomes a word from Romans 1:17 — "The just shall live by faith." And what about good works? Luther does not deny that these are necessary, but discovers that they follow upon faith.

According to the American writer, Luther is completely right. But, he adds immediately, it just so happens that this is also the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, even if it formulates that doctrine somewhat differently. This church has said at the great Council of Trent, after the Reformation, that we are saved through faith and good works, but in reality the council meant exactly what Luther had said: we need faith in Christ, and the good works need to follow that. Thus the whole thing is in fact a big "misunderstanding."

The writer acknowledges that many Roman Catholics do not know this truth at all. The last 25 years he has asked hundreds of Roman Catholic students: "If you were to die tonight, and God would ask you why he should admit you to heaven, what would be your answer? Most of them did not know what to say. Most of the time they did not even mention the name of Jesus. Nevertheless, he maintains that this is the official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church and that the Reformation was a mistake....

I must say that this is a bit problematic for me. I think we dismiss too easily what really took place in the 17th century. There is no doubt that it concerned essential matters which touched the very heart of the Christian faith.

Rev. H.M. Akkerboom, academic co-worker at the theological faculty of Tilburg wrote a few years ago: "When Luther shocked the church with the thesis that only God's grace, through Christ alone, provides salvation for humanity, he stood over against a church which seriously believed that one could earn God's grace through one's own good works. In addition, the teaching authorities thought that they could administer the merits of Christ according to their own pleasure.

The Reformation was by no means a mistake. It definitely had to do with the heart of the gospel. It had to do with the question: How does a poor sinner become righteous before God?

That was also the background of the selling of indulgences, to which the monk Tetzel's name has been connected. The church could "sell" indulgences (certificates of pardon); literally sell them for money. After all, the church was the guardian of the treasure chamber of Christ's merits. People who did not achieve enough good works could thus, through the indulgence, fill up their shortage. The thought that we live out of pure grace and that such grace comes purely and solely from God had disappeared.

Fortunately, the Council of Trent, which started in 1545 and ended in 1563, realized that. Not only did that council remove all kinds of misunderstandings in the church, but it also placed emphasis on the grace character of salvation. That's not to say that the council said that Luther had been right. On the contrary, it turned sharply against Luther and even condemned his vision that one could be justified only through faith. Justification takes place by the grace which is given through the sacraments and which enables one to carry out meritorious works. Salvation, according to Trent, remained a matter of grace *and* good works. Good works remain essential for salvation.

No difference

I believe all efforts at shoving Rome and the Reformation into one pack and at making them similar are doomed to fail. One of the first to try this after the Second World War was the well-known Roman Catholic theologian Hans Kung. He wrote a thesis for Karl Barth about the doctrine of justification wherein he compared Rome and the Reformation on this point. His conclusion already then was that there was no difference. When this dissertation was published, Karl Barth wrote an introduction. He wrote, among other things, that it was a very interesting thesis, but that he himself had not come so far as to believe it. It would mean that throughout the centuries the decisions of Trent had been misunderstood, by Roman Catholic as well as by Reformational theologians. Barth had a hard time believing that.

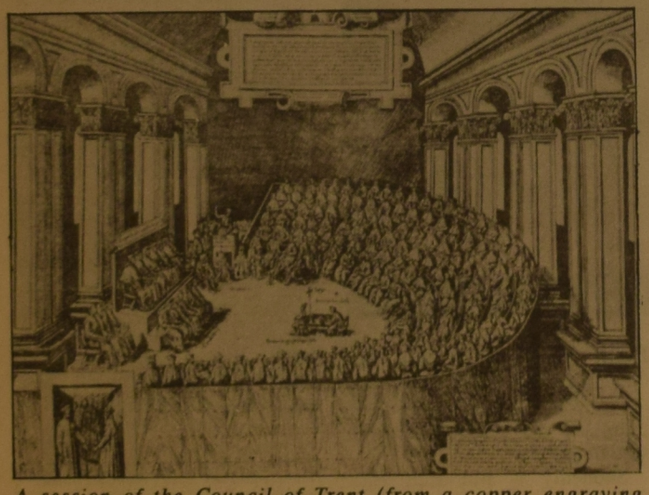
Moving toward Luther

It's my opinion that Barth was completely right here. It's quite possible that today many Roman Catholic theologians and believers agree with Luther. To be honest, I hope that this is the case. But nothing is gained by doing violence to history and to say now that Rome and Luther have always been in agreement. That certainly is not true. Why else did Trent so sharply judge Luther and his teaching of attributed righteousness and of justification *sola fide* (by faith alone)? And why would we some 400 years after Trent discover this so-called unanimity? It's remarkable that someone like Cardinal Willebrandse [a Dutch cardinal], who spoke such complimentary words about Luther, has recanted nothing that was said by Trent.

The Reformation was by no means a mistake. It definitely had to do with the heart of the gospel. It had to do with the question: How does a poor sinner become righteous before God? Rome said, and still says: "A person must take grace *into* him- or herself through the sacraments and then perform good works." Only then can he or she be accepted as a righteous person by God. Ultimately then, salvation is a matter of Christ's work *and* my good works. Luther said: "The deepest mystery is that God reckons Christ's righteousness as my righteousness. If the gospel of Christ's death on the cross is proclaimed to me and I accept that in childlike faith, I am at that moment righteous in the eyes of God. Of course, I must then live as a disciple of Jesus and do good works, but those good works come *after* my salvation." Salvation is not: Jesus' work and my good works. Salvation is Jesus' work alone.

Martin Luther reading in his cell at Erfurt (from a painting by Sir Noel Paton).

This is where the deepest difference remains, at least officially. I do believe that many Roman Catholics have, in fact, moved towards Luther. But the official teaching of the church is still the teaching of Trent. At the official level the deep difference remains, and we must still say, in spite of mutual discussions, the Reformation was not only historically necessary (because of the many abuses in the medieval church) but it was also theologically necessary (because justice was not done by the church of Rome to the all-determining character of Jesus' work of salvation).



CC FILE PHOTOS

A session of the Council of Trent (from a copper engraving published in Vienna in 1565).

Dr. Klaas Runia is former editor of Christelijk Weekblad *and a former professor of theology at the Theological School of Kampen, the Netherlands.*

Book Review

Ancient heresies raise their pluralistic heads

Bert Witvoet

Standing Firm: Reclaiming Christian faith in Times of Controversy

By Parker Williamson.
Lenoir, North Carolina: PCL Publications (Tel.: 610-543-0227), 1996. 209 pp. Softcover; ISBN 0-9652602-0-8. $12.00 (US) plus $3.00 (US) shipping.

America's mainline churches are falling prey to an ancient heresy, says Parker Williamson in *Standing Firm* (a book not to be confused with Dan Quayle's autobiography of the same title). Williamson could easily be talking about Canada's mainline churches as well.

In A.D. 325 the church stood its ground against the dualistic teachings of Arius, who believed that God was the unknowable and Jesus was a limited, created being who, because he was perfectly obedient to God, earned the title Son of God. The church's answer to this Hellenistically inspired theory was the Nicene Creed with its statement that Jesus Christ is "God of God, Light of light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made."

Williamson admits that nobody was very comfortable with the phrase "of one substance with" since it does not appear in the Bible and seems to violate the notion that God is Spirit. But he considers it a necessary statement, as did the early church fathers, to counteract the notion that Jesus Christ is inferior to the Father.

Many church leaders today are appropriating the ancient Greek dualism when they uphold a religious pluralism, says Williamson. "If, as the dualistic hypothesis claims, God is unknowable, then all statements about God become speculative. Theology becomes nothing more than a constellation of human opinions, any of which is as good as any other."

Those who, because of their uncertainty about God and Jesus Christ, stress the importance of religious tolerance are extremely intolerant when it comes to the audacious claim made by Christians that Jesus Christ is the only path to salvation.

Saving yourself

Williamson is the editor of the *Presbyterian Layman*, an American newspaper known for its strong traditionalist values and its critique of what is going on in the Presbyterian Church (USA). He and others were shocked when in 1993 a church-sponsored conference called "Re-imagining ... God, the Community, the Church" addressed God as "Our maker, Sophia." Several speakers at that conference said that if you bring out what is within you, you can save yourself, and that one should chuck the "male idea" of a transcendent God and go with the idea of an immanent God. Central to the thesis of the re-imaging conference was "the Post-Enlightenment assumption that human beings entertain numerous religious affections, none of which may claim universal validity," says Williamson.

CC FILES

The Council of Nicea

Circular sensitivity

One by-product of the emphasis on tolerance is the avoidance of any issue deemed controversial. Williamson gives a humorous example of this avoidance. He attended a meeting at which personal faith stories would be shared, even though the real problem was significant differences of views. The group Williamson was in did not mind sharing faith stories, but they also wanted to tackle a few policies and activities that had caused dissension in the Presbyterian denomination.

One member of the national staff said that tackling those policies sounded very confrontational and that she didn't want to hurt anyone's feelings. She was assured that she could be honest without worrying about hurting feelings.

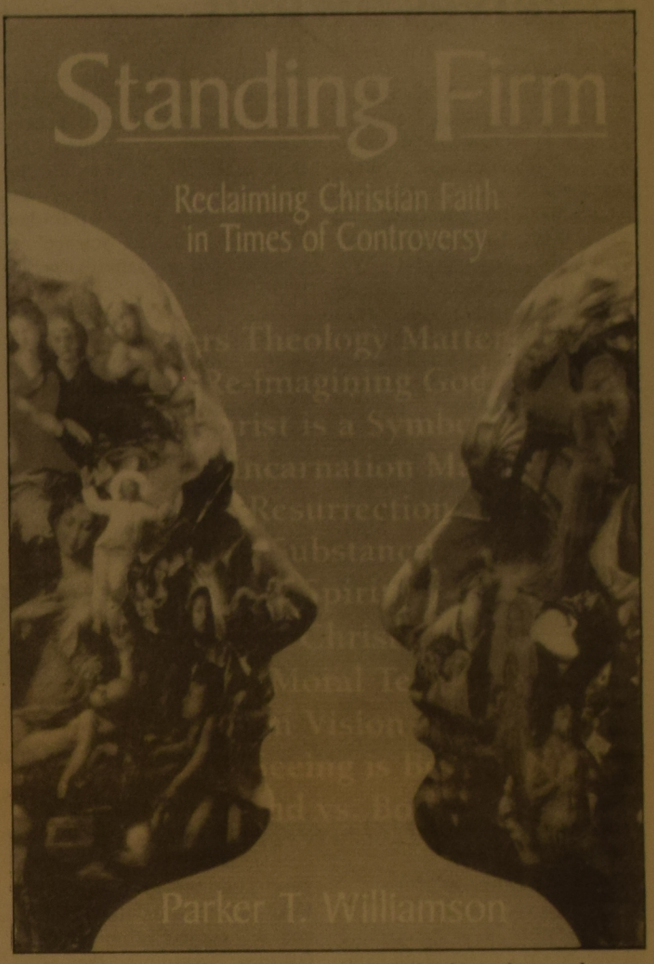
"But I feel a need for you to be sensitive to my need to be sensitive to your feelings," was the reply.

This incident typifies the approach taken by Presbyterian Church (USA) administrators, says Williamson. "Enormous efforts are exerted to establish 'sensitivity protocols' —rules of engagement that actually prevent honest confrontation and theologically substantive dialogue from occurring."

Search for ambiguity

In describing what happened at Nicea in 325, Williamson points to an attempt by Eusebius of Caesarea to reach a consensus creed. The proposed creed was vague at critical points and satisfied the Arians because they believed that their position could not win out. The creed left out statements that indicated that Jesus Christ is true God. But Athanasius would not agree to that and insisted on the phrase "of one substance with the Father." The church was saved from an ambiguity that would have given full reign to Arian philosophy, says Williamson.

He finds parallels in modern church life, where ambiguity is seen as the key to consensus building. At its 1994 General Assembly in Wichita, Kansas, a committee of the Presbyterian Church was put under pressure to come up with a consensus statement that would offer no significant criticism of the re-imaging conference. A lonely seminary student stood his ground in the committee and insisted that the statement should reflect that the re-imaging conference had exceeded the boundaries of Christian faith. The assembly overwhelmingly approved his revised statement.



Loyalty to truth

The title *Standing Firm* surely applies to Athanasius, the defender of the faith in the fourth century. He was bishop of Alexandria for 45 years, 20 of which had been spent in five separate exiles, as a succession of bishops and emperors opposed him. "But with all this pressure bearing on him, he changed his ground not one inch. His clear eye saw the truth once, and he did not permit his conscience to tamper with temptations to deny it. His loyalty to the truth made him a great power for good, a great blessing to the church of his own and all times." (Quote taken from *Life of Athanasius* by R.C. Reed.)

The benefits of Athanasius' theology were many, according to Williamson. In several chapters he traces these benefits: "It was a theology that made possible the birth of modern science [Chapter 7] a theology that offers a basis for human community [Chapter 8], a theology that breathes new life into Christian worship and the arts [Chapter 9], and a theology that provides a basis for Christian unity [Chapter 10]".

The key difference between Arius and Athanasius is the difference between philosophy and theology, says the author.

This book does a good job of reminding the church today that Satan can dress up ancient heresies as modern, enlightened theories of tolerance. It also warns church head-office administrators not to get caught up in "sensitivity protocols."

Around this time of Reformation Day services, it is important to confess that a church should neither be reform*ed* (resting on past struggles) nor *de*formed (accommodating itself to the world). It should always be reform*ing* itself in a dynamic struggle to remain faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ in a changing world.

Environment/Agriculture

Christian environmentalist receives award

Alan Doerksen

TORONTO — A member of Willowdale Christian Reformed Church in Toronto who works with Environment Canada has received special recognition for his work on global warming and climate change with the Atmospheric Environment Program. Henry Hengeveld recently received the 1995 Jim Bruce Achievement Award, which is named after a former Assistant Deputy Minister of the Atmospheric Environment Service (AES).

Hengeveld, who is a senior advisor on the science of climate change, has worked for more than a decade providing Ministers of the Environment with information on global warming and climate change and their effect on people.

An Environment Canada press release states, "It has been his thorough understanding of the science, insightful interpretation of the issues and masterful utilization of available science [which have] provided insight on the issues that have been a major factor in keeping this issue in the eye of the public and politicians alike.... Henry has provided the most up-to-date and state-of-the-art science assessments of this rapidly moving issue."

AES also congratulated Hengeveld for giving a high public profile to issues such as global warming. "He has an exceptional talent in taking complex ideas and putting them in such a way that his audience, be they newspaper readers, media people, scientists, or school children can understand them," states the press release.

Hengeveld doesn't particularly like the publicity the award has brought him. He says, "I'm appreciative of the award," but noted that there is a certain cynicism about awards such as this.

Two new national parks

From a Government of Canada press release

On October 14, at the opening of the World Conservation Congress in Montreal, Prime Minister Jean Chretien announced that the Government of Canada has protected lands for two new national parks in Canada's Arctic.

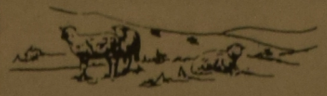
"This action to set aside ecologically sensitive land is an important step in this government's ongoing effort to complete Canada's national parks system," said the Prime Minister.

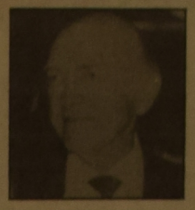
The two proposed national parks, which will be protected by land withdrawals, are both in the Northwest Territories. The first is at Wager Bay, on the west shoreline of Hudson Bay, and the second is on Northern Bathurst Island in the High Arctic, near the Magnetic North Pole.

Indian Affairs and Northern Development Minister Ron Irwin announced his support for the new parks: "I am pleased my department was able to contribute by providing interim protection of these lands under the Territorial Lands Act. These proposed national parks will ensure the protection of centuries of Inuit cultural resources that, to this day, are a part of the traditional lifestyle of nearby Inuit communities."

COUNTRY COUNTERCULTURE

VERN M. Gleddie





Farming is more than sheep or cattle

"How are the sheep?" I am frequently asked. People mean well and I do appreciate the attention, but there is far more to me than raising sheep, even where it pertains to the farm.

I have compared notes with other ranchers and it is often not sheep or cattle that are their primary interests, but being out in open spaces and working with their hands. As for working with livestock, the primary enjoyment is that it requires a good horse or dog.

Farmers in general have a variety of interests and abilities. "To be my own boss" is a common desire, although that "boss" can be unrelenting. Love of the soil and growing things is important. Constructive work — being able to see the result of one's labor — is attractive. There are a number of not-so-noble reasons for farming and ranching too, such as the gamble involved, desiring and acquiring large tracts of land and a huge inventory of machinery, and keeping up with the neighbors.

Then there are a few farmers who are interested in farming in obedience to the Lord of all creation. These are people who may have a peculiar mix of reasons for farming, perhaps even including some that are questionable. But they see themselves as providers of wholesome food and as caretakers of the soil. They see their actions as having long-term significance and even global consequences.

On November 29, Earthkeeping (Food and Agriculture in Christian Perspective) will celebrate its 25th anniversary. It is quite remarkable for a group to hang together that long on the basis of unselfish principle. These are people who, when planning and implementing farm operations, think of themselves as keepers of creation, as stewards of the parcels of land entrusted to them. This way of thinking is so engrained that it is as normal as putting on one's pants upon getting out of bed in the morning. They are ordinary people, quietly impressive in doing their best on the farm and in joining with others in public witness to justice, stewardship and compassion.

Big gain for small group

One small action early on in the history of Earthkeeping, then known as the Christian Farmers Federation (CFF), produced amazing results. Usually public action is difficult, carrying with it risk of ridicule, or the feeling that the juggernaught of exploitation and greed will roll on. But this time it was to be different.

The government of Alberta was considering a proposal by a coal company to strip-mine a large area of farmland southeast of Edmonton. Farmers in the area who weren't simply willing to sell out for a large sum had banded together to try to protect their land. But the largest general farm organization in the province, Unifarm, was sitting on the fence between the farmers who wanted to sell and the farmers who wanted to preserve the land, and the government was waiting for Unifarm to take a stand.

At that point the CFF made a solid public statement pointing out that Alberta was rich with coal deposits in areas where the surface would not have to be violated, and that Unifarm should get down off the fence on the side of protecting a large tract of productive farmland. Unifarm did just that, the government decided against the project, and some government officials credited a fledgling group of Christian farmers with saving action.

Not everything has gone so smoothly in Earthkeeping. There have been defections from the ranks, some for reason of lost personal dedication, and some would not tolerate certain policy decisions. There has been bitter wrangling at times over such topics as free trade, dam construction, and on taking up work linking local food production and consumption decisions to poverty in developing countries.

But a faithful core group, including some founding members, persevere on the basis of the principle established. Though members are few, they have been steadfast and faithful in attempting to determine what God requires of them, and to do it.

So next time you strike up a conversation with a Christian farmer ask something about the shared job of earthkeeping. Be prepared for anything from politics to philosophy to faith, and maybe even something about sheep, potatoes, milk....

Vern Gleddie is active in Earthkeeping and earthkeeping as a sheep rancher just outside of Edmonton.

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Please write: **CSS**, 455 Spadina Ave., #210, Toronto, ON M5S 2G8 or telephone: **(416) 598-2181**

Did you know?

Canada has the highest level of greenhouse gas emissions (i.e., air pollution) per capita of any country in the industrialized world.
(Discussed at the World Conservation Congress in Montreal.)

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Environment

Goldenrod not guilty!

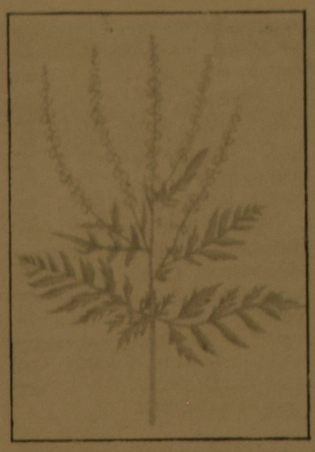
Fall can bring the aggravation of pollen allergies for some folk, who can be excused for blaming the showiest flowers that they see in the fields at this time. But the bright yellow goldenrod is not the culprit and does not provoke hayfever! Here's why:

For pollen to get around and trouble those who are allergic to it, it must be airborne. The goldenrod is not designed for wind pollination. Its flowers are brightly colored and its nectar is sweet to attract bees. Sticky grains of goldenrod pollen cling to visiting insects who carry it to the next plant, thus ensuring cross pollination.

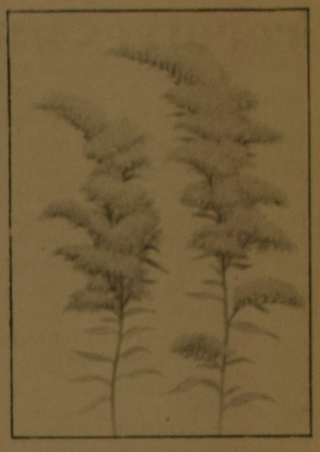
Although goldenrod pollen is too heavy to be easily carried in the air, the common ragweed produces thousands of dry, light pollen grains which travel well on the slightest wind. These tiny spiked pollen specks are not transferred by insects, and so the ragweed flowers need not be bright or showy to attract them. The inconspicuous green ragweed plant is therefore overlooked and some hayfever sufferers wrongly blame the goldenrod as the cause of their discomfort.

The much-maligned goldenrod, in fact, has a long history of folklore associated with its reputed healing properties and the "good luck" it brings to those who live near where it grows.

(From the *Kortright Observer*, Fall 1995)



Common ragweed



Gary goldenrod

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Wish you could spend more time calling friends or family in the Netherlands? Switch to Sprint Canada.

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And you always save 15% on all your other calls.

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Let's say you spend the most calling the Netherlands.
Your local telephone company's best rate is 47¢ a minute (excluding first minute), **if you spend a minimum of $40 each month.**
The same call with Sprint Canada is only 31¢ a minute (excluding first minute), **no matter how much you spend each month!**

	First Minute	Each Additional
THE NETHERLANDS Local Phone Co.	$0.70	$0.47
Sprint Canada	$0.47	$0.31

LOCAL PHONE CO.'S BEST RATES: 6:00 P.M.-9:00 A.M.

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Sprint Canada

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24 HOURS, 7 DAYS A WEEK.

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Classifieds

Classified Rates

(Revised February 1, 1995)

Births	$25.00
Marriages & Engagements	$40.00
Anniversaries	$45.00
2-column anniversaries	$90.00
Obituaries	$45.00
Notes of thanks	$35.00
Birthdays	$40.00

All other one-column classified advertisements: $15.00 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is $15.00. Letter under file number $35.00 extra. Photos: $25.00 additional charge.

Note: All rates shown above are GST inclusive

ATTENTION!

a) *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.,

b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is *not* acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.

c) Photographs sent by fax *are not* acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.

d) *Christian Courier* will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.

e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to five column inches. *Christian Courier* reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of $15.00 per column inch (GST incl.).

NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS

We offer a one-year subscription for only $25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the *Christian Courier* and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose $25.00 and the couple's correct address.

Christian Courier
4-261 Martindale Rd.
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
Phone: (905) 682-8311
Fax: (905) 682-8313

Thank You

BAKER:
Thank you for your prayers, cards and other tokens of love extended to me and our children. During the days of grieving the loss of Horace S. Baker, God's presence has become very real to us through your thoughtfulness.
Janice Baker and children.

Births

VANDER HEIDE:
"Your hands made me and formed me; give me understanding to learn your commands" (Ps.119:73).
With joy and thankfulness to the Lord, Bob and Lorraine Vander Heide announce the birth of their third child.

BENJAMIN PHILIP

was born on Sept. 24, 1996, at the Welland County General Hospital, weighing 8 lb., 13 oz. A little brother for William and Jacob. Ninth grandchild for Bep Vander Maas of Brampton, Ont., and Jack Vander Maas in heaven. Twenty-first grandchild for Bill and Willy Vander Heide of Wellandport, Ont.

Anniversaries

Wolvega Whitby
1946 November 14 1996
"But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15b).
With thankfulness to God, we are happy to announce the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents

BOUWE and YNTSKE EENLING
(nee HOOGEVEEN)

with love and congratulations from children and grandchildren.
George & Lena Eenling — Port Perry, Ont.
Nadine, Jason, Sarah
Pete & Thea Eenling — Courtice, Ont.
Nicole
Rob & Betty Stinson — Buckhorn, Ont.
Mary, Jon, Katelyn, Peter
Ken & Cathy Goring — Whitby, Ont.
Rory, Tyler
We invite you to share with us, in celebrating this special occasion at an open house on Saturday, November 9, 1996, from 2-4 p.m. at Hebron Chr. Ref. Church, 407 Crawforth St., Whitby, Ont. Address: R.R. #2, 3385 Highway #12, Whitby, ON L1N 5R5

Personal

ONE TO ANOTHER

Christian companion magazine. Hundreds of readers Canada-wide. Single issue $5. Write to:
#302, 1502-2nd Ave. S.
Lethbridge, AB T1J 4A2

TORONTO AREA
Independent lady (widow) desires to meet gentleman 60-65 years. I am still working but ready to retire and spend our golden years together. Please send letters to **File #2654, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.**

Obituaries

The Lord took home our dear brother

HORACE BAKER

while vacationing with his wife Janice Baker (Greidanus) in France, on Sept. 2, 1996.
Our comfort as brothers and sisters and in-laws of Horace is, that his confession was "that I am not my own, but belong — body and soul, in life and in death — to my faithful savior Jesus Christ." May that also be the comfort for Janice and her children and grandchildren.
Walter & Eunice Bakker — Edmonton, Alta.
John & Jennie Bakker — Victoria, B.C.
Harm & Frieda Bakker — Caledonia, Ont.
Durk & Fena Bakker — Wyoming, Mich.
Agnes Bron — Edmonton, Alta.
Jim & Magda Dykstra — Edmonton, Alta.
Everett & Trudy Baker — Pefferlaw, Ont.
Peter & Evelyn Bakker — Edmonton, Alta.

GEERTRUIDA (TRUDY)
VAN VLIET-VAN DUREN

of White Rock, B.C., passed away peacefully on Sept. 29, 1996, to be with her Lord Jesus.
Born Nov. 19, 1904, in Haarlem, the Netherlands.
Predeceased by an infant daughter. She is survived by her husband Adrianus Pieter Van Vliet with whom she shared over 66 years and her nine children:
Pieter (Ann) Van Vliet — Regina, Sask.
Sepkje (Loyd) Lind — Kamloops, B.C.
Louisa (Guenter) Bormann — Winnipeg, Man.
Adriaan (Elizabeth) Van Vliet — Cumberland, B.C.
Trudy (Bernie) Van Der Ziel — Regina, Sask.
Beatrix (Martin) Ploegman — Vernon, B.C.
Irene (John) Stronks — Calgary, Alta.
Margriet (Wiebe) Van Camp — Burns Lake, B.C.
John (Ann) Van Vliet — Victoria, B.C.
26 grandchildren and 28 great-grandchildren.
She will be sorely missed by her family and friends, but who can deny her the joy and peace of eternal life.
Lied: Psalm 68:10
(oude berijming):
Geloofd zij God met diepst ontzag;
Hij overlaadt ons dag aan dag,
met zijne gunstbewijzen,
die God is onze zaligheid;
Wie zou die hoogste majesteit
dan niet met eerbied prijzen?
Die God is ons een God van heil;
Hij schenkt uit goedheid zonder peil,
ons 't eeuwig, zalig leven;
Hij kan, en wil, en zal in nood,
zelfs bij het naad'ren van de dood,
volkomen uitkomst geven.

Obituaries

The Council of the Covenant Chr. Ref. Church, Woodstock, Ont., would like to express its sincere sympathy to Teena Bergman with the passing of her husband

JOHN BERGMAN

on Oct. 13, 1996.
John was a life-long member of our congregation and served faithfully for many years as organist and elder.
It is our prayer that Teena and her family will experience a rich measure of God's comfort and grace during this time of mourning.

For Rent

VINELAND, Ont.: Apartment for rent. Spacious one bedroom, fully self-contained main floor in a quiet neighborhood. Monthly rent includes utilities. Call **(905) 562-4908.**

For Rent

CLINTON, ONTARIO
ADULT LIFE LEASE
RESIDENCES

available, 936 sq.ft. to 1235 sq.ft. Fully wheelchair accessible, sprinkler system, central air, security throughout building. Dutch and English spoken. For more info. call **(519) 482-9454 or (519) 482-7862.**

Employment Wanted

27-year-old student (taking year off) is **looking for work in either Hamilton or Niagara.** Prefers a stationary job because of a back condition. Has MA and writing and customer service experience. Outgoing, friendly and reliable. If you know of anything, please call Dirk at **(905) 945-5335.**

Job Opportunities

THE GREATER WINNIPEG SOCIETY FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
operating
Calvin Christian School
Winnipeg, Manitoba
is seeking applications for the position of

PRINCIPAL

Calvin Chr. School offers a Christ-centred education to 357 students (K to 9) from various denominations in the Greater Winnipeg area. Applicants must qualify for Manitoba certification (60 hours minimum in education courses).

Please send your resume and statement of educational philosophy to:

Principal Search Committee
c/o Len Hordijk
425 Bonner Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2G 1B4

For further information call **(204) 338-7981**

Bulkley Valley Chr. School, Smithers, B.C.
With our present principal retiring, we invite qualified people to apply for the position of

SECONDARY PRINCIPAL

starting the 1997/98 school year.

Please send resumes and enquiries as soon as possible (deadline: December 20, 1996) to:

Principal Search Committee
c/o Mr. Ed Adema
Site 37, Comp. 8, R.R. #1
Smithers, BC V0J 2N0
Home phone: (604) 847-3080
Business phone: (604) 847-3981
Fax: (604) 847-4799

Classifieds

Miscellaneous

GOING TO HOLLAND FOR VACATION?
Why not rent a VACATION APARTMENT
and visit family and sight-see at your leisure.
CENTRALLY LOCATED near APELDOORN.
Year-round accommodations.
FOR BROCHURE OR MORE INFORMATION CALL
Harold or Nellie at (905) 985-7891 or fax us at (905) 985-0195.

CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS NEED CHRISTIAN TEXTBOOKS

The CCEF supports the cost of developing Christian textbooks for your local school.

Your financial support will help us in our publishing program. Your gifts are tax deductible.

CANADIAN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOUNDATION INC.

Fred R. Vander Velde
Executive Director

2621 Cavendish Drive
Burlington, ON L7P 3W6
(905) 336-5619,
day or evening.

DORDT COLLEGE

PROGRAM DIRECTOR FOR RECREATION CENTER

Dordt College is seeking a Program Director for the Recreation Center. This is a new position with a wide range of various responsibilities that involve the development and management of activities and promotion of the use of the new facility. An undergraduate degree in physical education is required. A masters degree is preferred.
A specific job description is available. Qualified persons committed to a Reformed, biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a letter of interest and curriculum vitae to Dr. Rockne McCarthy; Dordt College; telephone and mailing address below; facsimile: (712) 722-4496; e-mail: vpaa@dordt.edu

Dordt College
498 Fourth Avenue NE
Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697;
phone: (712) 722-6333

Dordt College is an equal opportunity institution and encourages the nominations and candidacies of women and minorities.

Job Opportunities

PACIFIC CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
VICTORIA, B.C.

SEEKS AN

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

Pacific Christian School is a well-established, interdenominational Christian school with 700 students in grades K-12. The schools draws its enrollment from 75 different churches representing 14 denominations in the Greater Victoria area.

An elementary principal is required to direct and oversee the operations of an elementary school with a staff of 25 and an enrollment of 400 students in K-7.

The principal must be a committed Christian, a team player, and be able to articulate a sound vision of Christian education. P.C.S. seeks a principal with a minimum of 4 years experience in Christian school leadership and one who qualifies for a B.C. College of Teachers Professional Certificate.

Inquiries may be directed to:
Mr. Bill Bomhof, Board Chairman,
Victoria Christian Education Society
Phone: (250) 727-7024 (residence) or (250) 385-1505 (work)

Please send your resume, a statement of your vision of Christian education and supporting documents in care of:
Mr. John Messelink, Secondary Principal
654 Agnes St., Victoria, BC V8Z 2E6
Phone: (250) 479-4532 or fax (250) 479-3511

Miscellaneous

RBC

PRACTICAL: Hands-on experience in ministry; professors with real life experience; Bible major; university-level bachelor degree; accredited; affordable.

PERSONAL: Community of believers sharing a ministry focus, size conducive to easy interaction; contacts that last a lifetime.

Call our Admissions Office at 616-363-2050.
3333 East Beltline NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505

Miscellaneous

WHEN DID WE SEE YOU HUNGRY?

800 million people will go to bed hungry tonight. You won't.

As a partner in the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, your church is making a difference by sharing grain and other resources with needy people throughout the world.

You can see there is a problem. Be part of the solution. Make a grain or cash donation to your church's account today.

Canadian Foodgrains Bank
A Christian Response to Hunger

Box 767
Winnipeg, MB Canada
R3C 2L4
Call 1-800-665-0377 or
204-944-1993

Classifieds

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Het vertrouwde adres.

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Grimsby 905-945-3301
Burlington 905-522-8602
Emergency Service Available
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Miscellaneous

ATTENTION!

If you are considering sending us an ad via fax, please be sure to:

- send printed or typed copy
- include billing address
- include contact person with phonenumber.

Thank You.

PAUL'S JOURNEYS

Interested in following the footsteps of the Apostle Paul?

TRAVEL TO GREECE & TURKEY
with
Rev. & Mrs. J. Visscher
see: Athens, Corinth, Thessalonika, Ephesus, Patmos, Crete, Philippi and Rhodes.
Twelve day tour leaving **March 10 to March 22.**
Included:
Airfare, First Class Hotels, Meals, Bus Tours and four-day Cruise of the Greek Islands.
Free stop-over in Amsterdam available.
From $3199.
For more information call:
Grace at Visscher's Travel & Cruise
1-800-811-2388 or (604) 530-6771; fax (604) 530-8077
Book now! Limited space.

FROM COAST TO COAST

ENGLISH RADIO:

BRITISH COLUMBIA

DUNCAN-CKAY	10am	1500
Burns Lake-CFLD	9:15am	1400
Kitimat-CKTK	8:30am	1230
Osoyoos-CJOR	8:00 am	1490
Penticton-CKOR	8:00 am	800
Port Alberni-CJAV	7:00 pm	1240
Prince George-CIRX	7:00am	94.3
Princeton- CHOR	8:00 am	1400
Smithers-CFBV	9:15am	1230
Summerland-CHOR	8:00 am	1450
Vancouver-CJVB	7:00 am	1470
Vancouver-(fm)	7:00 am	103.3
Vernon-CJIB	9:30pm	940

ALBERTA

Brooks-CIBU	8:00am	1340
Edson-CJYR	10:00am	970
Ft. McMurray-CJOK	8:30 am	1230
High River-CHRB	6:30 pm	1280
St. Albert-CHMG	8:00 am	104.9

SASKATCHEWAN

Estevan-CJSL	8:00am	1280
Weyburn-CFSL	8:00am	1190

MANITOBA

Altona-CFAM	9:30am	950
Steinbach-CHSM	9:30am	1250
Winnipeg-CKJS	9:15am	810

ONTARIO

Atikokan-CFAK	9:30am	1240
Chatham-CFCO	6:00 am	630
Fort Frances -CFOB	9:30 am	640
Guelph-CJOY	8:30am	1460
Hamilton-CHAM	7:30am	820
Kapuskasing-CKAP	9:00am	580
Kingston-WLKC	7:30 a.m	100.7
Newmarket-CKDX	9:30am	88.5
Oshawa-CKAR	8:00am	1350
Owen Sound-CFOS	10:30am	560
Pembroke-CHVR	10:00am	1350
St.Catharines-CKTB	7:30pm	610
Sarnia-CHOK	7:30am	1070
Stratford-CJCS	8:45am	1240
Windsor--CKLW	8:30am	580
Wingham-CKNX	10:30am	920
Woodstock-CKDK (fm)	8:00am	102.3

NEW BRUNSWICK

Saint John-CHSJ	9:30am	700

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Charlottetown-CFCY	7:00am,	630

NOVA SCOTIA

Digby-CKDY	6:00am	1420
Kentville-CKEN	8:30am	1490
Middleton-CKAD	8:30am	1350
New Glasgow-CKEC	7:30am	1320
Sydney-CJCB	8:00am	1270
Weymouth-CKDY	8:30am	103.1
Windsor-CFAB	8:30am	1450

TELEVISION:

Faith 20-TV
(Monday to Friday)
Ontario 5:30am
on the Global TV Network
Check your local listings for cable outlets airing *Faith 20.*

Vision -TV
(every Saturday)
British Columbia ..... 7:00 & 10:00pm
Alberta ..... 8:00 & 11:00pm
Sask. & Manitoba..... 6:00 & 9:00pm
Ontario & Quebec..... 7:00 & 10:00pm
Nfld., N.B., N.S. & P.E.I.. 8:00 & 11:00pm

THE BACK TO GOD HOUR

P.O.Box 5070, Burlington,ON
L7R 3Y8 (905) 336-2920

Events

REDEEMER COLLEGE

YOU'RE INVITED TO REDEEMER COLLEGE'S
13th annual
SENIOR CITIZENS' DAY

Thursday, October 31, 1996
Registration: 9:30 a.m.; Program: 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

MORNING PROGRAM:
"Memory Partners" presented by Prof. Theo Plantinga

AFTERNOON PROGRAM:
The Redeemer College Concert Choir performs, complemented by musical selections from a number of our students.

Registration fee (incl. lunch): $10.00 Call (905) 648-2131
REDEEMER COLLEGE - 777 HWY. 53 E., ANCASTER, ON L9K 1J4

Miscellaneous

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Willowdale - Toronto - Rexdale - Etobicoke - Scarborough - Brampton - Orangeville - Richmond Hill - Newmarket - Oshawa - Bowmanville

Classifieds/Events

Church News

Christian Reformed Church

Calls accepted:

— to Clinton, Ont., **Rev. Wieger De Jong** of Tillsonburg, Ont.

Available for call:

— The Council of Fellowship CRC, Ancaster, Ont., wishes to announce that **Rev. Fred Koning** is available for call, having completed his Masters of Theology degree during a study leave. The council recommends him to the churches. Rev. Koning may be contacted at 18 Anne Court, Grimsby, ON L3M 5B4; Ph. (905)945-1704.

New addresses:

— **Rev. Henry Steenbergen**: 34889 Everett Dr., Abbotsford, BC V2S 7R9; ph. study (604)859-9443, res. (604)859-1406.
— **Rev. Jerry J. Hoytema**: 375 Book Rd., Unit #26, Grimsby, ON L3M 2M8; ph. (905)945-6612.
— **Rev. David H. Kromminga**: 6237 Charles St., Halifax, NS B3L 1N6; ph. (902)422-2272.
— **Ministry to Seafarers**, The Christian Reformed Church, 401 E. Waterfront Rd., Vancouver, BC V6A 4G9; ph. (604)253-4421, fax (604)253-0874.
— **Rev. Richard E. Grift**: 69 James Ave., Brantford, ON N3S 6Y4; ph. (519)756-1661.

Attention: All churches

Please inform us of important changes. Items under "Church News" will be included free of charge.

Job Opportunities

Calgary Christian School
seeks a
SECONDARY PRINCIPAL

Calgary Christian School (CCS) is a well-established, inter-interdenominational school with 635 students in grades K-12.
A **Secondary Principal** is required to direct and oversee the operations of the secondary campus with a staff of 20 and approximately 225 students in grades 8-12.
The Principal must be able to articulate a sound vision of Christian education and be committed to working as a member of an administrative team.
CCS seeks a principal with training and experience in Christian educational leadership and excellent communication and interpersonal skills. The successful candidate must be qualified for Alberta Teaching Certification.
Application **deadline is November 22, 1996.** Please send resume, a statement of your vision of Christian education and leadership, and references to:

Mr. J. Lindemulder, Chairperson of the Board
Calgary Christian School, 2839-49 Street S.W.
Calgary, AB T3E 3X9
Phone: (403) 242-2896
Fax: (403) 242-6682

SEEKING A PASTOR

Horizon Community Church, a new CRC ministry of 100 families, is seeking a pastor. The church is located in the thriving suburban community of Highlands Ranch, a part of the **Denver Metropolitan area**. Key to the church's program is Bible-based dynamic preaching, enthusiastic worship, and sharing of the gospel in active outreach to a suburban community. Essential to the church's development is continued facilitation of the merging of two congregations and leadership for staff ministry. Please send inquiries and/or resumes to the **Search Committee, Horizon Community Church, 7140 S. Colorado Blvd., Littleton, CO 80122.**

Events

The London Region of Canadian Federation of Christian Reformed Women
will host its

FALL RALLY

Thursday, October 31, 1996, at 9:50 a.m., D.V.,
Bethel Chr. Ref. Church
716 Classic Drive, London, Ont.

Theme:
"From Generation to Generation"

Speakers:
Rev. Gerrit Haagsma from London Bethel C.R.C.
Mrs. Ida Kaastra Mutoigo, Hamilton

Admission is $2.00. Bring your own lunch. Refreshments will be served. Members and non-members welcome.

Elders' Conference

Speaker:
Dr. James A. De Jong
President of Calvin Seminary

Topic: ***"Guardians of the Soul"***

Description: Using case studies this seminar will analyze situations elders encounter regarding worship, divorce, education and formation of the faith, discipline, spiritual care, consistorial conflict, and supervision of the pastor. Principles will be developed to guide elders' work in these areas, and suggestions will be offered on how to be more informed and confident regarding it.

Date: November 9, 1996
Time: 1:30 p.m.
Place: Aylmer Christian Reformed Church
Address: 194 South St. W., Aylmer, Ont.
Contact: Church Office (519) 773-3025

A warm invitation is extended to all!

Calendar of Events

Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.

Oct. 26 Giant bazaar at Trinity Chr. School, Walkers Line, **Burlington**, Ont. Doors open at 10 a.m.; auction at 6 p.m. (#).

Oct. 26 Back to God Hour rally with the OCMA directed by Leendert Kooij and organist Andre Knevel. Speaker: Rev. David Feddes on "Celebrate God." At 8 p.m., St. George's Anglican Church, Woolwich St., **Guelph**, Ont. Info.: (905) 679-2296.

Oct. 26 Fall concert by the "Con Spirito Choir" (John Kaldeway-director) with Laurens Kaldeway at the organ. At 8 p.m., Chalmers United Church, **Woodstock**, Ont. Tickets/info.: (519) 0438.

Oct. 26 Christian Rainbows Fellowship-sponsored special meeting, 10 a.m., **Ingersoll**, Ont. Speaker: Mr. W.J. MacPhee, publisher of *Schizophrenia Digest*. Pre-reg. required $7.00. Info.: (905) 639-1075 or (519) 631-0307.

Oct. 26 Conference jointly sponsored by the Chr. Labour Association of Canada and the Canadian Chr. Business Federation. From 9:15 a.m.-3 p.m. at the CLAC office, 5920 Atlantic Dr., **Mississauga**, Ont. The morning session will deal with the topic of "downsizing." Afternoon speaker: *ChristianWeek* editor, Harold Jantz. Info.: (905) 670-7383.(#)

Oct. 26 Information meeting about "King's Terrace" (a Salem affiliate), 2 p.m., Second CRC, 444 Steeles Ave. W., **Brampton**, Ont. Info.: (905)457-6715(#)

Oct. 27 Combined "Reformation Day" worship service, 6:45 p.m., Saunders Secondary School, 941 Viscount Rd., **London**, Ont. Speaker: Rev. John Klomps. Info.: (519) 269-9924.

Oct. 27 Dutch worship service led by Rev. John D. Hellinga, 3 p.m., Chr. Ref. Church, **Aylmer**, Ont.

Oct.28-31 "Canadian Leadership Conference '96" for pastors, mission, parachurch leaders and staff. For info. call Evangelical Fellowship of Canada at (905) 479-5885 (#)

Oct.30-Nov.2 "Free to Serve," celebrations will be held **Oct. 30:** Jubilee Auditorium, **Edmonton**, Alta., and **Nov. 2:** Redeemer College Auditorium, **Ancaster**, Ont. For details, see ad in C.C., Sept.6/96 (#)

Oct. 31 "Senior Citizens' Day" at Redeemer College, **Ancaster**, Ont. From 9:30 a.m. till 3 p.m. Speaker: Prof. Theo Plantinga. Registration fee (includes lunch): $10. Info.: (905) 648-2131 (#).

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Book Review

In search of freedom

Sierd Woudstra

Van Vrijmaking tot Bevrijding (From Liberation to Freedom)

By Aleid Schilder and Jan Veenhof.

Baarn, the Netherlands, Uitgeverij Ten Have, 1995. ISBN 90-259-4597-X. Paper, 205 pp. Reviewed by Sierd Woudstra, former editor of De Wachter, *Grand Rapids, Mich.*

The title *From Liberation to Freedom* is telling. "Liberation" refers to the split that occurred in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Gereformeerde Kerken) in 1944. Those who were put out of the GKN or broke with it and started their own denomination, often called "the Liberated Reformed Churches" (GKN-Vrijgemaakt), saw it as a liberation from the yoke imposed on them by the synod of the GKN. "Freedom" refers to the authors' own experiences when they left the continuing yoke of the "liberated" church and found room to be themselves outside its walls.

Through their parents, both authors became directly involved in the schism. Aleid Schilder, born in 1949, five years after the *Vrijmaking*, is the daughter of Herman Schilder, a professor at the "liberated" seminary in Kampen and a nephew of Dr. Klaas Schilder who spearheaded the "liberation." Jan Veenhof, only 10 years old when the 1944 breakup occurred, is the son of Cornelius Veenhof, who was one of the first professors at that new seminary.

Not just theology

Church splits rarely have a simple cause. The 1944 split in the Netherlands was no exception. Many things fed it, but eventually, the sacrament of baptism — why it is administered and what promises God gives in baptism — became the focal point. It was an old theological problem, dating as far back as the 16th century. It concerned how to combine two emphases in Reformed thinking — one on God's covenant and the other on divine predestination. The concept one begins with, covenant or predestination, really determines how one looks at baptism.

If only it had remained a theological question. But it didn't. Through personal conflicts — call it a power struggle between theologians, notably those of the Free University in Amsterdam and the "renewal theologians" at the Kampen Seminary, the churches got involved.

The mix proved deadly. The spark that lit the fuse and caused the explosion was the ill-advised declaration in 1942 by the synod of the GKN (presided over by Dr. G.C. Berkouwer who later came to regret the actions of that synod) that certain teachings were binding on all officebearers of the church. Klaas Schilder, despite warnings by some of his Kampen colleagues to quit his inflammatory writings, began to head a revolt against the synodical decisions. Neither side was willing to give an inch. Matters came to a head in 1944 when Schilder, and others to follow, were deposed and then formed their own church, the GKN-Vrij. and seminary.

Absolutist views

History has a way of repeating itself. Incredible as it may seem, soon the newly formed "liberated" church began to do what the GKN had done earlier when it declared certain teachings as binding. There were those in the "liberated" church who began to talk about the "Liberation of 1944" as a redemptive act, a work of the Lord. When some pastors of the GKN-Vrij. sought closer contact with the GKN in an effort at reconciliation they were considered traitors to the cause (of the Lord!). Eventually this, combined with other disputes, resulted in a break in the GKN-Vrij. in 1967.

Klaas Schilder used the confessional true/false church distinction to such a degree that he insisted that in any one locality there could only be one true church, and that was the GKN-Vrij. According to him, Christ at his return would recognize the true church from the postal address of the liberated church.

Klaas Schilder's absolutistic views began to bear their bitter fruits after his death. The more rigid elements in the GKN-Vrij. took control, and they saw it as their duty to rid both seminary and church of "wrong" views. The actual break came in 1967. An irenic man, professor Cornelius Veenhof, Jan Veenhof's father, along with others, including his friend professor H.J. Jager, became so-called *buitenverbanders* (non-belongers). His family followed him.

Aleid's father, professor Herman Schilder, stayed on. But it caused a deep rift in his family. His wife and family (there were 10 children) did not follow him. Fortunately, his marriage to Aya, Aleid's mother, held, though they began to attend different churches. Interestingly, in Aleid's view, though her father was a *binnenverbander* (belonger), he did not quite fit the liberated mold. Once, after coming home from a tiresome day at the seminary, he said, "After my emeritation I am going to write heretical books."

CC FILES

First faculty of Liberated Theological School in Kampen. Cornelius Veenhof, second from left, and Klaas Schilder, fifth from left. The others (l. to r.) are: D.K. Wielenga, P. Deddens, S. Greijdanus, B. Holwerda and D.J. Buwalda.

Being yourself

Jan Veenhof describes his own studies at the "liberated" seminary as "solid but confined." He also felt a growing longing for a less cramped environment and for room to think for himself. He went to Gottingen, Germany, for his doctoral studies, and got his PhD with a dissertation on Herman Bavinck. In the eyes of his own church, the GKN-Vrij., the Free University in Amsterdam was off limits. His disenchantment with the "liberated" church became complete when in 1961 that church refused to join initiatives to do something about healing the breach of 1944.

But history can take strange turns. Following a brief stint as a pastor in Basel, Switzerland, Jan Veenhof, son of the "liberated" church, who even attended some of Klaas Schilder's lectures, was appointed to be the successor of the renowned professor G.C. Berkouwer at the Free University of Amsterdam. He also affiliates with the "synodical" GKN: a step, he writes, he has never regretted. "The liberated churches have their good points, but I couldn't live there. In the synodical churches not everything is ideal, but you can live there and be yourself."

After 16 years at the Free University, Jan felt the need for yet a new start. He returned to Switzerland and the pastorate in the Swiss Reformed Church. He currently is 'distinguished visiting professor' at Calvin Seminary in Grand Rapids, Mich. (see *Christian Courier*, Sept. 20, 1996).

Faith truly liberates

Aleid Schilder has her own story to tell. Her upbringing was thoroughly "liberated." She was 18 when the 1967 split rent the GKN-Vrij. Feeling herself more and more estranged from that church with its rules upon rules, of her own volition she became "unchurched." A difficult life followed in which she fought severe depression which eventually required professional help.

A radio commentary on what church splits can do to people, in which the schism of 1967 and Aleid Schilder's family are centre-stage, and the writing of a pre-doctoral thesis on religion, depression and therapy, helped her to come to terms with herself. The writing of that thesis enabled her to diagnose her depression as a kind of *Reformed* depression, in part brought on by the church atmosphere in which she was brought up.

So she came to experience the Christian faith as something that truly "liberates." She developed a new, holistic outlook on life, in which Christ who truly sets people free is the spiritual centre. The schism of 1967 meant the end of her membership in the "liberated" church. She has not joined any other church.

As she tells it, that experience has given her a kind of polar bond with her great-uncle Klaas Schilder. In his preaching, Klaas Schilder possessed the biblical insights to lift people out of themselves to find their peace in Christ. So ironically, while the church Schilder founded enslaved her spiritually, the faith he preached finally set her free from that church and gave her true spiritual freedom in Christ.

I commend both authors for their candid book.